

THE TATE GALLERY



UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
NOTTINGHAM

Author MANSON

Class Mark 91N 1080

Book No. 600330674x



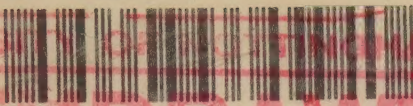
UNIVERSITY
OF NOTTINGHAM
LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

WITHDRAWN

FROM THE LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM



WITHDRAWN

FROM THE LIBRARY

POOL STOCK

002417

THE TATE GALLERY

Public
Library
of the
City of
New York



PLATE 1.—LA SERVANTE DE BOCKS: Manet.

THE TATE GALLERY

By J. B. MANSON

ASSISTANT KEEPER OF THE TATE GALLERY

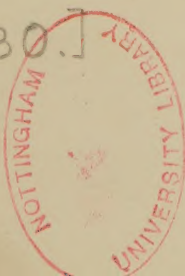
AUTHOR OF "REMBRANDT," "DEGAS," "ENGLISH OIL-COLOUR PAINTERS"

ETC.



LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK, LTD.
35 & 36 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.; & EDINBURGH

[1930.]



330674

X760285496

c

0.386
P

TO
SAMUEL COURTAULD

TO WHOSE GENEROUS SPIRIT AND FINE
ARTISTIC TASTE THE NATION OWES SO
MANY GREAT MODERN PICTURES.

PREFACE

THE Tate Gallery, at its opening in 1897, consisted of seven galleries and a central hall on the main floor, a balcony under the dome on the first floor, and a gallery over the vestibule and offices in the basement. In 1899 Sir Henry Tate added eight more galleries and a sculpture hall. Sir Joseph Duveen, senior, presented the Turner wing, consisting of five rooms on the main floor and others in the basement. It was opened in 1910.

The fine Galleries for Modern Foreign Art, on both floors, with a large Gallery for the works of J. S. Sargent, the gift of Sir Joseph Duveen, the present Baronet and the Gallery's great benefactor, were opened in 1926.

The official title of the Gallery is now the National Gallery, Millbank, although it is still popularly known as the Tate Gallery.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	I
II. HOGARTH AND THE PORTRAIT PAINTERS	15
III. BLAKE AND HIS FOLLOWERS	32
IV. CONSTABLE AND THE LANDSCAPE PAINTERS	41
V. TURNER	61
VI. NINETEENTH-CENTURY GENRE PAINTERS	73
VII. THE PRÉ-RAPHAELITES	80
VIII. ALFRED STEVENS	93
IX. WHISTLER AND HIS INFLUENCE	99
X. WATTS AND BURNE-JONES	109
XI. THE LATER VICTORIANS.	116
XII. SARGENT AND THE LATER PORTRAIT PAINTERS	125
XIII. NEW ENGLISH ART	134
XIV. THE MODERN SPIRIT	148
XV. SCULPTURE.	156
XVI. THE CHANTREY BEQUEST	165
XVII. COROT AND THE IMPRESSIONISTS	170
XVIII. GAUGUIN AND VAN GOGH	191

LIST OF THE COLOUR PLATES

1. LA SERVANTE DE BOCKS: Manet	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. LAVINIA FENTON AS "POLLY PEACHUM": Hogarth	16
3. ADMIRAL KEPPEL: Reynolds	20
4. THE PARISH CLERK: Gainsborough	24
5. A CORNFIELD WITH FIGURES: Constable	48
6. HASTINGS: Turner	68
7. THE EVENING STAR: Turner	72
8. BEATA BEATRIX: Rossetti	80
9. THE BOYHOOD OF RALEIGH: Millais	84
10. DEATH OF CHATTERTON: Wallis	92
11. KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR MAID: Burne-Jones	112
12. HOPE: Watts	116
13. BETWEEN TWO FIRES: F. D. Millet	120
14. A SILENT GREETING: Alma-Tadema	124
15. NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE "BELLEROPHON": Orchardson	128
16. JUNE IN THE AUSTRIAN TYROL: MacWhirter	132
17. THE VIGIL: Pettie	136
18. CATSPAWS OFF THE LAND: H. Moore	140
19. THE GIRL AT THE GATE: Clausen	144
20. CARNATION, LILY, LILY, ROSE: Sargent	148
21. DIANA OF THE UPLANDS: Furse	152
22. THE MIRROR: Orpen	156
23. MADAME SUGGIA: John	160
24. OLD DECEMBER'S BARENESS EVERYWHERE: Buxton Knight	164
25. CAFÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DIEPPE: Sickert	168
26. PAINSWICK BEACON: Steer	172
27. PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST: Tonks	176
28. FEMME ASSISE: Degas	180
29. CÉZANNE CHAUVE: Cézanne	184
30. LA BAIGNADE: Seurat	188
31. FLOWER PIECE: Gauguin	192
32. LANDSCAPE WITH CYPRESS TREES: Van Gogh	196

THE TATE GALLERY

I

INTRODUCTION

THE collection of paintings in the Tate Gallery may not be a perfect representation of the whole of British art, justly balanced, equally strong in all periods, but it does serve as a conspectus by which the general direction, and the lines on which English painting has grown, from Hogarth to the present day, may be studied.

Art in England has developed mainly by the operation of the forces of reaction, punctuated, as it were, by influence from abroad. The rise and fall in the course of its progress may be easily perceived; the heights are not more clearly marked than the depressions. It is convenient to make Van Dyck the starting-point, for the work of the Flemish master dominated the English School for nearly one hundred years from the middle of the seventeenth century, and his attractive if artificial methods and style were exploited by most of the English painters. In the hands of Lely, Kneller, and others the practice of painting gradually degenerated—the usual result of adopting second-hand methods—into the driest convention. A reaction from it—a breaking away and return to nature—became inevitable. The appearance of William Hogarth, as the pioneer of the realists, marked the inauguration of a period of individualistic painters, drawing inspiration from nature rather than from the work of the older masters, although still far from complete emancipation, and still strongly under the influences of an accepted and fashionable style.

Signs of awakening life were apparent in the work of the remarkable group of portrait painters of the eighteenth century, although none of them, with the possible exception of Zoffany, had the directness and raciness of Hogarth. The “grand manner” remained still the ideal. It haunted the work of Reynolds. Culture and tradition imposed obstacles to faithful observation; though less so with Gainsborough and Wilson than with Sir Joshua; Romney was successful, but second

rate ; Raeburn, a little later, coming from Edinburgh to London, brought with him a style of his own, which was robuster if not nearer the truth.

Covering almost the same period, and mostly working independently, were a number of landscape painters whose work was even more remarkable through the strength of its originality and the native character of its genius. Two of the more famous also practised portrait painting. Richard Wilson, who has been called "the father of English landscape," practically abandoned portraiture after his visit to Italy. Gainsborough preserved his early devotion to landscape, although his work in this direction became more artificial, as his practice confined him to cities and he was never able to recapture the simple realism of his early work. Old Crome and his stalwart followers of the Norwich School founded, on the Dutch tradition, a method of landscape painting which became definitely English in character. Turner, a man of genius and great variety, from a realistic painter developed into an imaginative dreamer without parallel in the history of art. Constable, with a passion for the truth of natural effect, painted in the open air, in the valleys, and by the rivers of his native county of Suffolk, with a force and vigour hitherto unknown in landscape painting. He was one of the few English painters who have influenced French art, and his work undoubtedly played a part, through the Barbizon School, in the making of the French Impressionist movement. It was a remarkable epoch in English art, which included such men whose names are milestones in its history, and whose work reached such a high level of artistic excellence as to make it difficult to answer the question whether the native artistic genius of England—on the few occasions when it has manifested itself—found its most genuine expression in landscape or portraiture.

Notwithstanding the imposing figures of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Raeburn, and Zoffany, the evidence is somewhat in favour of the landscape painters, on the grounds of greater originality.

But one must not forget the group of animal painters, George Stubbs, Benjamin Marshall, Wootton, and others, whose work, produced unobtrusively—and afterwards rather neglected—was so instinctively English and so racy of the soil.

Besides the great masters there was a formidable array of lesser painters, and one or two strange figures like William Blake, who belonged to no school but stood alone in eccentric isolation.

It is not a difficult matter to trace the gradual decline of portrait painting from the heights of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Hogarth, and

Zoffany, through the brilliantly accomplished and artificial Lawrence, to the Pickersgills and their like. The decline was probably inevitable, for production could not have been maintained on the same high level without injection of new ideas or a renewal of that communion with nature by which Hogarth had given new life to art. The exigencies of portrait painting impose a convention which, once mastered, is endlessly repeated until life and interest in it are extinct.

The decline in the early nineteenth century was neither startling nor remarkable. There followed a general weakening of concentration, an increased practice of a studio-made convention well within the painter's powers, with a corresponding absence of effort to express truth. Concurrently there grew up the school of genre and anecdotal painting which Wilkie, in imitation of the Dutch masters, had made so popular. Wilkie, however, had a sense of style and an appreciation of character which had some relation to life. But this last quality was denied to his followers, whose work gradually became merely illustrative of incidents drawn from literature. The decline affected all branches of art. The cult of the anecdote had its repercussion on the work of the landscape painters, and the highly skilful and popular Edwin Landseer directed his talents to the degradation of animals by depicting them as playing parts in sentimental situations.

The poverty of the subject-matter selected by the anecdotists for their pictures, and their lack of distinction in handling it, provoked a revolt. The reaction against it—the feeling of discontent which animated some of the younger painters—was brought to a head by three ardent students—Rossetti, Millais, and Holman-Hunt. It led, in 1849, to the manifestation known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. They saw clearly that further development in art could only be achieved by a return to nature. But they were obsessed with literature, and their concern with nature was limited to facts of natural detail and not to a broad perception of natural effect. The movement was an interesting one, but, as its basis was really literary and not artistic, it had not within it the roots of future development, and although it resulted at first in the production of some remarkably interesting pictures, its fires gradually waned, and after twenty-five years of activity were practically extinct, although its influence still operated here and there in a desultory and unimportant way. It had, however, changed the course of English art and brought to it new interest and activity, and introduced a much-needed excitement into art affairs.

It cannot be said that art in the latter half of the nineteenth century had any great distinction. It was a period of considerable activity, and the average level of production, although middle class, was somewhat higher than the preceding period. But there was more independence and a tendency towards greater individuality in the methods of painting.

Whistler was another of those strange and isolated figures who have appeared from time to time in the history of art. He stood out picturesquely against the dull art of the time, an exasperating mocker of what may be called the *bourgeoisie* of the art world. He stirred both artists and critics out of their complacency, and if his influence was limited it was a salutary one, though his theories, being concerned more with the method than the end, lacked vitality, and his work had little effect on the main current of art.

The most important event of the latter part of the century was the foundation of the New English Art Club in 1886. It had no revolutionary significance, but it gathered together all the independent painters who were out of sympathy with the Academy, gave to painters a freer opportunity of exhibiting their work, and showed the public that there were other and different if not better forms of painting than those which Burlington House had approved and made popular. The Club, which has united such painters as Wilson Steer, Professor Tonks, Orpen, Professor Rothenstein, Sargent, McEvoy, Augustus John, and Walter Sickert—to name but a few of the more distinguished members—has had a stimulating effect on modern art. If there is no longer the same need for it in these days, when there are so many Galleries and Art Societies ready to support an artist no matter how untrained or how eccentric, it has played a most important part in what may be called the emancipation of modern art.

The early years of the twentieth century saw English art involved in an almost chaotic variety of influences, most of them originating on the other side of the Channel. There was a readiness to accept any new movement which promised notoriety, and a possible way out of the *impasse* into which, as it seemed to the younger spirits, art had stumbled.

It was clearly impossible to surpass the work of the great masters on traditional lines—at least, it was possible only to a genius. But it was not recognized or, at least, admitted, that however attractive new ideas may be, all genuine expression, and only genuine expression, has value. The question does not arise whether Rembrandt has surpassed Piero della Francesca; the art of both was sincere and beautiful; both, therefore, had value.

But the significance of this had no weight with the impatient, youthful spirits who felt the need of fresh stimulus and saw in the new movements excitement and a chance of immediate recognition, however dubious it might be. In their hasty adoption of the new ideas they were supported by the encouragement of the "advanced" critics who perceived a promise, at least of good copy, in the new movements.

It had taken nearly half a century for the French Impressionist movement to reach London. Its influence on English art was almost negligible, being confined to Lucien Pissarro and his followers: Spencer Gore, Harold Gilman, and a few others. But Post-Impressionism, with Paul Cézanne at its head, had claimed its followers (or victims) in London almost before the death of its leader.

No one would have been more astonished than Cézanne himself, could he have seen the turmoil into which his pictures were to plunge the art students of London; nor would he have been less horrified at the variety of artistic sins committed in his name. And one can imagine his amazement at the complicated theories invented to explain his extremely simple art.

Other isms there were besides Cézannism—Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism, and the as yet nameless ism founded on the *naïveté* of the *douanier* Rousseau. But these had little real influence. The dominating force which was to move newer English art was that of Cézanne. The direction was uncertain, but the movement was obvious.

Then the doctrine that the new is always good was preached by one or two critics, with the result that certain young painters achieved a brief success in the Exhibition galleries. Futurism made a hasty and hysterical visit to London, leaving very little trace of its passing. The *douanier* Rousseau has had a longer vogue; his work, misunderstood, has encouraged certain callow students to make a virtue of their immaturity and incompetence. In this way they have undoubtedly been supported by certain "enlightened" collectors. All this stirring up is but a passing excitement; great art is not produced under the influence of cocktails—mental or spirituous. But ebullience is healthier than stagnation. There is vitality in one and disease in the other. Out of the hurly-burly something permanently good may emerge. It has not yet appeared, in spite of the complacency of the critic who has presumed to say which examples of present-day eccentricity will be hailed by posterity as masterpieces.

English art at its best expresses a simple love of nature; it has a definitely literal side, the liking of things for their own sake. It is

realistic in a somewhat literary way ; it does not find its most characteristic expression through the medium of abstractions ; it does not regard nature as colour, form, and tone, etc., but as consisting of things. No English painter could have discovered Impressionism or invented Cubism. They place substance before style. And the recent attempt under the impulse of modern French art to develop in English art a school of relatively abstract painters is doomed to failure because it is foreign to the English character, and is, therefore, exotic. No doubt it can be reared, but it must be kept in the hothouse of Bloomsbury. Already it has produced some strange and interesting fruit, but although it may look attractive on the tables of the super-refined seekers after rare meats, it is doubtful if it has any real vitality. Not being indigenous it will not flourish long in England. But it may have lasting influence, possibly a beneficial one, on the main stock of English art—that remains to be seen. Nevertheless it must be remembered that painters who surrender completely to French influence may be forfeiting the no mean heritage of English tradition.

There are common qualities in the work of those painters who are the most English in character, though one finds the English spirit more often among the landscape and animal painters than among the portraitists. Portrait painting being, except among the few great masters, a more conventional art, its practitioners are more susceptible to foreign influence.

If one studies the work of Hogarth, Wilson in his rare English landscapes, the early Gainsborough landscapes, and those early portraits of figures in landscapes—the most racy examples of English art—Constable (above all), Turner (occasionally), Stubbs, Morland, Crome when he was not imitating Hobbema ; Madox Brown, Martineau, and Boyd Houghton (on the literary side), Charles Keene and Wilson Steer (deriving from Turner and Constable), one may get a pretty clear idea of the real character of English art.

This thin line of English tradition is the golden thread in the complicated tapestry of English art. It has preserved its character—its straightforward love of nature and reality—through all the pressure of more exciting alien influence.

Hogarth freed English art from the obvious conventions of the followers of Van Dyck. But he was unable to free it completely from all convention, for art is itself a convention. His own work is very con-

ventional in colour, for colour as a vital method of art expression had not been seriously considered. The perception of *natural* colour was still undeveloped. The sense of its importance was of slow growth, and although the work of the Barbizon painters tended towards purer colour, the full range of colour expression was revealed only by the French Impressionists.

The earlier painters had regarded colour only as an aid to decoration or to the enhancing of the attractiveness of their work. Even Ruskin, who professed to understand Turner, regarded colour as of minor importance. The reality which the majority sought was a *literary* reality rather than what we may call an *artistic* one.

The work of the English portrait painters, regarded from the point of view of natural truth, was false. The backgrounds of their portraits were conventional, and the relations of the figure with them were unreal. That imposing figure of Admiral Keppel, with its background of sea and stormy sky, would look very different in nature from Reynolds's representation of it (No. 886). But that kind of truth was not sought after; if it were regarded at all, it was regarded as being outside the province of art. The expression in art of exact truth of natural effect was a purely modern development. So, although one may admire the skill of the painting, the revelation of character, the grace of composition, and other qualities in the works of the earlier masters, one can never experience the thrill in contemplating them which only the sting of intimate truth can give. In a word, their art was purely academic. Even Hogarth, who went to real life for his subjects and who meant to paint life as he found it, is academic. He regarded art and life from a new point of view; his colour sense was not new; he adopted the familiar brown backgrounds—brown which is no colour, but a mud made of many colours. Those interiors of his in the "Marriage à la Mode" and other admirable series, beautifully painted as they are, are false as expressions of natural effect. But no man can serve two masters, and if Hogarth had sought after intimate truth of effect, the significance of his story would have been lost in the greater beauty. Imagine the same subjects as painted by Manet or Degas. But Hogarth's technique suited his particular intuitions; and so often he used painting as a means of satirical comment on the life of his time, and only rarely—as in his "Shrimp Girl" and the Portraits of his Servants—as a means of purely artistic expression.

Constable was the first English painter who tried to paint natural effect as such. Turner also tried, but Turner was not so single-minded

as Constable ; he was haunted by the " grand manner " ; he was attracted by historical painting, and concerned with all sorts of rivalries, although in his later work he got nearer to natural colour than Constable, and actually forestalled, instinctively, the French Impressionists. But Constable, with all his simple love of nature, did not perceive refinements and subtle variations of colour in nature. There is much black and nondescript grey in his work, although it must be remembered that some of his larger pictures have faded badly. His greens are frequently heavy, and always generalized.

With the discoveries of the French Impressionist movement, modern art, with its concern for exact truth, really begins. From that moment art becomes an intimate part and expression of life, not merely a decorative adornment of it. And with it comes a new kind of pleasure and an unfathomable mystery which decorative and more conventional painting could never give.

To attempt to define the *quality* of art is to attempt the impossible. Yet there is some intrinsic quality which makes one picture a work of art, while another, lacking it, though it may be more skilfully executed, remains merely a painting.

Although this essential quality cannot be described, it is perhaps possible to consider it.

In a country where feeling for art is not one of the national characteristics, it is particularly difficult to arrive at a common understanding of the term " art." There are many obstacles in the way, and some of them are imposed by the mere existence of such a body as the Royal Academy, for lacking any intuition in this matter of art, the majority of people turn to that institution for guidance, and naturally assume that any work receiving its blessing must be a work of art in the strict meaning of the word, and consequently the artistic quality of a painting is, in the popular estimation, measured in ratio to its degree of photographic realism. But verisimilitude is not the criterion of a work of art. The artist's purpose is not the mere imitation of natural objects ; it is the expression of the emotion aroused in him by the contemplation of nature. There are thousands of pictures most skilfully painted which express no emotion whatever. For unfortunately it is possible for a painter of talent to learn the craft of painting so that he can perfectly imitate the superficial aspect of things.

The artist must receive a first vivid impression ; it is that which he

has to express. His difficulty is to carry the expression to completion without losing anything of the warmth and vitality of his original impulse.

Cézanne could do this in a remarkable way. He had sometimes as many as one hundred and twenty sittings for a portrait, and we know that he would work from nature on a landscape year after year—at the same time of year—and yet he seemed to retain to the end all the strength and freshness of the original impression, so that the result appears to be effortless and spontaneous. Degas also had the power of converting his impression into a concrete and rhythmical design, with the perfect use of all the qualities which make up a work of art, and yet with no loss of original feeling. In that respect he is an example of the perfect type of artist.

But the usual practice in England, and among official art circles abroad in varying degree, is to seek for a suitable subject for a picture, to arrange it in the studio, and to paint it in the accomplished manner learnt in the school of art.

In that case there is no original emotional impression, and the result cannot be a work of art. It is a reversal of the order of things. Wilkie's work is a good example of this practice, for Wilkie was an exceptionally gifted painter, and learned in the craft of picture-making, and at times he had the feelings of an artist. Yet such a picture as "The Village Festival" (No. 122) or "The Blind Fiddler" (No. 99), though most skilfully composed and painted, is not a work of art, nor even a truthful impression of a scene in nature. One may admire its qualities, but it cannot evoke any emotional response. It is like all the pictures of its kind, merely description. And, at that, a description made from the point of view of the ordinary spectator—a commonplace vision. To any one but an artist it might convey an adequate idea of the subject, because such a person wishes to know only of what things the scene was composed. To any artist it could convey nothing of the mystery, the moving force of reality of the subject.

Many people must have experienced moments when, coming upon a scene unexpectedly, they have been arrested by its appealing beauty. It is precisely that first impression, that original emotion, that the artist has to realize. And how seldom he is able to do it.

On further and closer examination of the subject, details emerge which tempt the painter to exercise his powers of imitation, or which, if not kept strictly in place, detract from the force and beauty of the whole, and the original impulse is lost.

Turner realized that, especially in his later work ; the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Holman-Hunt, fell into the trap, although Arthur Hughes, at his best moments, avoided it. It is thus the business of the artist to capture that first faint careless rapture, and express it with all the resources of his craft. There are, of course, individuals who can feel such things but have not the talent to express them in concrete form. There are others, variously gifted, who are able to express them only incompletely, or who experience only occasionally moments when the technique of expression is completely united with the impulse. Such a painter was Charles Conder. In such cases the artist's work is remarkable for its inequality.

Naturally, perhaps, where there is no instinctive appreciation of art as such, the question of subject is regarded as of paramount importance, and pictures are judged chiefly by their subjects—the best picture, in that case, being that which has the prettiest or the most interesting subject. And so we find painters going to Venice to look for the beauty they are unable to perceive in London. Or to seek for subjects which shall appeal to buyers as interesting or important. The subject of a picture is of value only so far as it is capable of moving or impressing the artist, so that he feels compelled to express it. Anything in nature is a suitable subject under those conditions, although, of course, the richest subject has the greatest possibilities.

Let us take, for example, such a picture as “*La Maison du Pendu*,” by Cézanne, which is in the Louvre. It has the simplest of subjects. The corner of a steep country road going downhill ; an old house with two tall trees in front of it, in the left centre ; a barn or cottage on the right ; a view of distant country. It required an artist to make a great picture out of such material. Yet that picture expresses a remarkable depth of emotion ; it has an atmosphere of mystery. It is an expression of feeling of a kind, rare not only in modern art, but in art of any period. And it is not the greatest of Cézanne's works. It entailed no visit either to Venice or to the British Museum. It was part of Cézanne's everyday life. Such a case is a test of the innate qualities of the artist. Given the original feeling, those qualities of expression—drawing, harmony of colour, rhythm of design—which are or are not part of the artist's personality, play their part. They are called into being by the subject which, as it were, sets light to something within the artist's mind. They have quite an inferior value when they have been merely acquired by rote in the school of art. Indeed, the mechanical application

of rules so acquired is very obvious; it is the most repellent thing in art.

The treatment and style of any painting is inherent in the artist's intuition. Therefore each picture presents a new problem to the artist, and must be painted in an individual way. The inevitable weakness of academic art is that it is the exercise of a cast-iron technique learnt by rote and applied indifferently to all subjects. Again the process is reversed. Instead of the technique being a means to an end—a method by which an impression may be expressed—the subject is sought for in order that the acquired technique may be exercised. Thus academic pictures differ only in subject; fundamentally they are all the same. It is easy to perceive this when looking round the rooms of the Tate Gallery, where such pictures are hung, or by visiting the Royal Academy exhibitions year after year.

It is difficult to explain the relationship in art of technique and intuition. Only few painters appear to realize it. But in a work of art they should be inseparable. The special quality of an intuition—the impression made on an artist's mind—can be expressed only in one way; it demands its own expression. If the impression could be transferred to canvas from the artist's mind, without mechanical intervention, we should get perfect expression. The painter who most nearly approached that ideal was Van Gogh. Works of art are not produced by efforts of will or by force of intellect.

Certain critics are to blame for confusing means with ends. It is for that reason that they welcome any new method of painting. They admire the primitives for the qualities they do not possess, and find the virtue of certain original modern artists in some peculiarity or mannerism of technique. They use the most complicated language to conceal their lack of perception, and invent the most ingenious reasons to explain their admiration for certain modern works of art.

Self-hypnotism plays no small part in their comedy. But art is essentially simple, and Cézanne—the pet subject of their revelations—is a very simple artist.

Van Gogh is the most striking example of an artist inspired by the purely modern feeling—that is, the direct expression of life. His work is so straightforward and forcible that, in a sense, it is artless. No painter was ever more devoid of tricks and devices. He felt life so keenly that he could scarcely wait to express it, but set down his impression in a kind of red-hot enthusiasm.

For this reason he has been very little imitated. And since his work is the expression of intense feeling, only an artist of an equal degree of sensibility could imitate him. With Cézanne it is quite different. Cézanne's work is full of peculiarities which another painter can imitate with sufficient plausibility to impress the uninitiated spectator. He was no less an artist than Van Gogh, but his personality was much more complicated and his mind was not purely that of an artist. I mean that he was moved at times in his work by impulses which were not purely artistic. In this he was not unlike Turner.

It is possible that a study of Cézanne might throw some light on this vexed question of art. Particularly as his influence has been a potent one, and it is so often supposed that there is some esoteric basis to his art. Cézanne's rhythm, of which we have heard a good deal of late years, was instinctive, a matter of feeling, and not a scientific device which has only to be discovered to be applied by other painters with equal effect.

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), although his junior by only nine years, was, in a sense, a pupil of Camille Pissarro. He received advice from him and went painting in his company. Unlike Van Gogh, he was not an instinctive artist expressing his immediate delight in the glory, beauty, and mystery of nature. He was fascinated by the Old Masters whose work he studied and copied in the Louvre. He was not, like Van Gogh, a primitive artist, but he had a definite idea, acquired from other painters, of what a picture ought to look like. It was not enough for him that his work should be a direct expression of his feelings about nature. It is an attitude of mind, and Cézanne was to some extent sophisticated.

He said he wanted to make of Impressionist art something solid and enduring like the art of the museums, and repeatedly throughout his life he attempted rhythmic compositions—usually of bathers, nude figures, in the open air—which should express some idea which he had acquired in his study of the Old Masters. They were usually failures ; interesting, rhythmical, distorted.

They represent one side of Cézanne—the intellectual, not the artistic. But it is these that some of his most voluble admirers have seized on for the subject of their most ingenious explanations. Possibly they need explanation, but that is not the case with the majority of his paintings in which he expresses his exquisite perception of the quality of nature. There is a parallel in the case of Turner, whose tremendous imaginative "machines"—his intellectual productions—compel a cool admiration, but have none of the emotional capacity of his simple paintings from nature.

The important thing to remember is that Cézanne was, except for his intellectual excursions, simply trying to paint what he saw and felt, in the best way he was able. Those splendid qualities in his work of balance and rhythm, of solidity, of harmonious tone and colour, were the qualities of his mind. He was richly endowed with such gifts. They were inherent and not acquired, though developed by practice.

This simple painting from nature, be it landscape, still-life, or figures, without any recourse to recondite or rare subject-matter, is a severe test of an artist. It reveals the quality of his mind and temperament. Cézanne found beauty in common life—the beauty that is around us on every hand—for the artist and the poet to perceive. And only in those intellectual excursions, to which reference has already been made, did he seek after the precious or the remote. In his later work he attained to a state of quiet reflectiveness, where the mind speaks and the hand obeys without the intervention of will or intellect.

The queerness that some people profess to find in Cézanne's work exists really within themselves. They have no independent vision of nature, and when they look at pictures expect to find them like all other pictures. They resent the unfamiliar in art, because it means a readjustment and the disturbance of a long established complacency. Even that little portrait of himself, which is in the Tate Gallery, has been considered eccentric, yet nothing could be much simpler. Nor could there be a more delightful example of Cézanne's exquisite perception of colour in its most subtle *nuance*. It is a never-ending pleasure to examine it.

It is possible, perhaps, that a study of the work of this modern master may give the sympathetic spectator an insight into the quality of art. On the other hand, one may take numerous examples of academic painting to show the skill in picture-making and the accomplishment in execution, which arise from no emotional impulse, and can never result in the production of a work of art. Such examples are only too common.

Alma-Tadema is a good illustration, for he was a painter who had great skill in the photographic imitation of nature—of materials, textures, and substances—and who imagined that the greatness of a picture depends to a great extent, if not entirely, on its subject. He started as a painter of contemporary life more or less in the manner of the old Dutch masters. His work then, although it showed no particular originality, showed some direct feeling; for what he had actually perceived in his life affected him in a way that no imaginary scene, drawn from the past, could possibly do. But soon he turned to ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome for his subjects,

seeking to reconstruct scenes extracted from their history. He had immediate success, for he was gratifying the expectancy of commonplace collectors and satisfying the popular conception of a work of art. Although these illustrations of the past could not have moved him as actual life with its mystery and beauty must move even the most set and conventional painter, the living models from which he painted seem to have meant no more than documents to him. They are painted in the most careful, dull, and laborious manner, and are seen without emotion, and with a cold and objective perception to which nothing new seems ever to have been revealed. It is possible, no doubt, to derive pleasure from his remarkable skill, but there is nothing behind it; all that it has to tell is told at once and quickly forgotten. Even in our time—and it is only seventeen years since his death—Alma-Tadema's work is dead. It no longer receives even the appreciation of the market-place. And the same may be said of a great many academic painters.

There are pleasures of a sort to be derived from anecdotal painting and from pictures which are not great works of art, but the pleasure experienced by those who are able to perceive and understand the true quality which is the life and soul of a work of art—which endows it with an everlasting life—is inexhaustible. It is a fount of constantly renewed interest which never runs dry.

II

HOGARTH AND THE PORTRAIT PAINTERS

It has become the custom to regard Hogarth as the starting-point of the Modern English School of Painting, and there is much reason as well as convenience in the arrangement.

From 1632 onwards Van Dyck's elegant and imposing style had captured the fancy of the portrait painters of the period. It had been exploited to an extent which eventually destroyed all initiative. Sir Peter Lely (1618-80), who already had a certain reputation as a portrait painter in Haarlem, came to England in the train of William of Orange in 1641, a few months before the death of Van Dyck. Lely speedily adopted the conventions of the Flemish master which he found so popular. He even imitated his drapery designs, and tried to copy the characteristic hands of his portraits. He had great success at the Court, and an enormous number of commissions came his way. Although in his series of admirals (in Greenwich Hospital), which include some of his best work, he developed qualities not possessed by Van Dyck, he had considerably exploited the latter's manner, and had, moreover, been obliged to train a number of copyists in whose hands the convention became even more mechanical. Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), an inferior painter, though a pupil of Rembrandt, came from Hamburg to London about 1696. He practised much the same methods, until, from force of repetition, the convention became like a coin that, from constant use, had lost its imprint.

Joseph Highmore (1692-1780), although a pupil of Kneller, displayed more personal qualities and taste in his work. But it cannot be said that he was a great painter or an originator. Sooner or later, from a convention so lacking in vitality, and which, from being a means, had developed into an end in itself, reaction became inevitable.

And with the hour had come the man. William Hogarth (1697-1764) was an artist of a calibre very different from that of the painters who had been content to adopt an agreeable convention ready-made for the manufacture of flattering portraits.

Fortunately he did not belong to what are called the "cultured" classes, and consequently he had no temptation to exploit the fashionable conventions in painting. His lively interest in people, his keen sense of character, humour, and dramatic effect, led him to turn to contemporary life for his subjects. Being poor, and a man of great originality of character, he wasted no time in coquetting with the unreal. Within some two years of taking up oil-painting he had produced "The Wanstead Assembly" (1728), and was engaged on the "Scene from the Beggar's Opera" (No. 2,437).

Hogarth was a Cockney, having been born in the parish of St. Martin, Ludgate. His father came from Westmorland, and was a man of some learning.

Through his apprenticeship to a silversmith named Gamble, for whom he engraved crests and ciphers, he developed a talent for engraving which led in 1718 to his working for the booksellers. On the expiration, about 1726, of his apprenticeship, he entered the Academy in St. Martin's Lane. He continued to issue engravings up to 1764, and early in his career he had illustrated an edition of *Hudibras*; but we are concerned only with his oil-painting.

He studied painting under Sir James Thornhill (1676-1734), a Devonshire man, who had been Serjeant-painter to Queen Anne and to George I., and was a very accomplished decorative painter.

In 1729 Hogarth eloped with his master's only daughter, but was forgiven by Thornhill, mainly, it is said, on account of the merits of his fine series of paintings for "The Harlot's Progress" (1731).

Contemporary opinion, as usual disliking the unfamiliar, considered that Hogarth could neither draw nor compose; an opinion which now seems too ridiculous to be credible. Certainly his ideas of composition were then original and not bound by the well-worn academic conventions of the time. It is of no importance that his contemporaries failed to appreciate his great technical gifts; as a painter it was of vital importance to future art that he drew his subjects from real life. The paintings of "Marriage à la Mode" (1745), which was one of his later and most successful series, show that his composition was effective and varied, and at times practically faultless. It can be imagined that he would have made a remarkably good stage manager, so theatrically effective are his compositions, and he could handle a crowd, in the pictorial sense, with marked ability.

He was a delightful painter for those who could distinguish fine



PLATE 2.—LAVINIA FENTON AS "POLLY PEACHUM": Hogarth.

painting ; an agreeable colourist with a real painter's feeling for pigment, and an unrivalled sense of comedy and dramatic effect.

It may be said that he created a new species of painting—the moral comic—and he made popular those small “ conversation pieces ” which have a peculiar charm of their own.

There is nothing more delightful or more simple than “ The Shrimp Girl ” (No. 1,162), or the “ Portraits of Hogarth's Servants ” (No. 1,374), both of which are at Trafalgar Square.

To a society fed on flattery he was too truthful and too uncompromising to be popular as a portrait painter, and although his portraits are full of character and vivacity, and are, at least in those respects, superior to the popular portrait painters of the time, who had a much greater reputation, it was fortunate, if not surprising, that his activities were not limited to portraiture.

The “ Bishop Hoadley ” (No. 2,736) is an imposing and handsome work, and one can share something of Hogarth's evident enjoyment in the painting of it, and “ Lavinia Fenton, as Polly Peachum ” (No. 1,161), is a homely, friendly, and perfectly English portrait, warmly harmonious in tone and colour, and notably sincere in its directness. But the series of paintings in which he satirized the vices and follies of the time were his most original and important contribution to art.

The “ Marriage à la Mode ” series (Nos. 113-118) consist of six scenes. They were completed in 1744, and were sold by Hogarth at auction on June 6, 1751, when they were purchased by Mr. Lane of Hillingdon for the sum of £126 ; the frames alone had cost the artist 24 guineas. After many adventures they eventually became the property of Mr. Angerstein in 1797 for 1,000 guineas, and passed into the National Gallery when the Angerstein Collection was purchased in 1824. The series represents profligacy in high life, and shows the ill effects of a marriage of convenience in which the rank of one party and the wealth of the other are the only attractions.

The story is developed with great dramatic effect to its fatal *dénouement*. Hogarth's love of character, especially of rather exaggerated types, is given full play, and there is a remarkable feeling for significant detail and for appropriate *mise en scène*. But although we can now admire the compositions for their balance, their suitability to the dramatic moment, their variety, and their sense of the inevitable, they violated all the canons of composition at the time they were painted. Like all innovations in art, they gave annoyance, aroused vituperation, and were

sold only with difficulty and for a paltry sum in 1751, when the artist was fifty-four and at the height of his reputation. His work was, indeed, too real for the prevailing taste. It was considered vulgar. Lavater said, " You must not expect much majesty from Hogarth. This painter rose not to the level of the really beautiful : I should be tempted to call him the False Prophet of Beauty. But what inexpressible richness in the comic or moral scenes of life ! "

With all his common sense, Hogarth was not a little vain, and he did not entirely resist the temptation to paint something in the " grand manner " ; a temptation which the pompous Sir Joshua found peculiarly alluring, and which did not spare even the debonair Gainsborough.

" Sigismonda mourning over the Heart of Guiscardo " (No. 1,046), in spite of its sound quality as a painting, was not a success. It was painted in 1759 for Sir Richard Grosvenor, who, however, declined to accept it. It was not Hogarth's only attempt at the " grand manner," but it was, he declared, perhaps more in defiance than sincerity, his favourite picture, and no doubt he liked it better for the severe attacks made on it by Lord Orford and by Reynolds. The latter, indeed, appears to have resented Hogarth's audacity ; he says, not without justice, " After this admirable artist . . . had invented a new species of dramatic painting, in which, probably, he will never be equalled . . . he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him : he was, indeed, so entirely unacquainted with the principles of this style, that he was not aware that any artificial preparation was even necessary. . . . "

One of Hogarth's most attractive paintings is his own portrait with his dog Trump (No. 112). This was painted in 1745, and remained in the possession of Mrs. Hogarth until her death in 1789. Hogarth made an engraving of this portrait as the frontispiece to a volume of his engravings. In the corner of the picture was painted a palette with the " Line of Beauty and Grace " marked upon it. This created much curious speculation, and involved the painter in so many disputes that he determined to write a book to explain his system. This, of course, did not silence his adversaries ; on the contrary he was assailed, both by the graver and from the press, by a variety of publications. But his chagrin was somewhat alleviated by a rare complimentary letter from Warburton, and his Analysis was translated into German and Italian.

In his life and character Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), the first President of the Royal Academy, was very different from Hogarth.

Hogarth's life, with its freedom and unconventionality, its simplicity, its hospitality, its quarrelsomeness and lack of humbug, appeals to us as a much more suitable life for an artist than the official life of Sir Joshua. But Reynolds was cut out for the part and played it well. In that very fact lies some criticism of his artistic mentality.

About the age of seventeen Reynolds came to London from Plympton Earl, near Plymouth, where he was born, and was apprenticed to Thomas Hudson (1701-79), the portrait painter. It had originally been intended to make him an apothecary, but a perusal of Richardson's *Treatise on Painting* decided him to become a painter. This circumstance calls to mind the confession of W. P. Frith that "it was a toss up whether I became a painter or an auctioneer," and Whistler's comment that "he must have tossed up." Reynolds was not an attractive personality, and time has proved that he was not a sound technician. One may excuse his pomposity as being the price of his success, but his jealousy was not admirable, and his lack of consideration for Richard Wilson, a great artist, was unforgivable.

The English portrait painters of the eighteenth century have a reputation which is out of all proportion to their purely artistic merits. This is partly due to their discovery and exploitation by the dealers. The date of the discovery may be estimated by a reference to the records of the saleroom. The first big price paid for a Reynolds was in 1821, when Lord Normanton paid £1,155 for a picture of "Charity," but for long after that a Reynolds could have been bought at auction for a guinea. Their work has certainly afforded a very fertile field for speculation.

They were great masters of the art of manufacturing portraits. Circumstances did not permit the production of many works of art, although Gainsborough performed the feat more frequently than Reynolds. Portrait painting is the most conventional of all arts—its limitations are tolerable only at the hands of the greatest masters. Reynolds was not one of these. He had immense ability and talent, and a power of organization. He knew his conventions by heart, and he handled them with an air of conviction. But great art is not produced in that way.

His training had been thoroughly orthodox. He worked in Rome, where, in the Vatican, he acquired lifelong deafness and a love for the "grand manner." But artists are born and not made, even by a sojourn in Rome, although that delusion still persists even in these enlightened days.

Success came quickly to him. He settled in London in 1752, and within a few years became the most popular portrait painter in the capital. He had so many commissions that he had to arrange his business almost like that of a fashionable photographer. His charges at that time seem ridiculously small. For a head, three-quarters length, and whole length, he received 10, 20, and 40 guineas respectively. They increased gradually. Northcote recorded, on the authority of a letter from Dr. Johnson, that his charge for a head in 1758 was 20 guineas. He had in stock certain specimen designs for portraits, and the sitter was allowed to choose which he or she preferred. Small wonder that so many of Reynolds's portraits were mere machines.

He had to employ pupils to assist him and to paint draperies and backgrounds for him. Hogarth used to call Mr. Toms, one of his earliest assistants, "Reynolds's drapery man." He later employed Vanhaaken, whom Hudson had found so useful, and on the death of that eminent "drapery painter" Hogarth published a ludicrous caricature of Vanhaaken's funeral procession, including all the portrait painters of the Metropolis as mourners and overwhelmed with distress.

Reynolds is not very well represented in the Tate Gallery, and not by any of his finest works. The collection contains none of his more delicate portraits of women, which at their best are very fine and subtle, and which represent another aspect of his perception, different from his solid and full-bodied painting. But there are one or two pictures which show certain aspects of his art to advantage. "Admiral Keppel" (No. 886) is a late portrait, painted in 1780. Reynolds considered it "one of his most perfect pictures." He painted as many as ten portraits of Keppel between 1753 and 1786. It is one of those heroic official portraits which he did so efficiently. It is solid and imposing; decorative and substantial. It shows a fine feeling for pattern and effective silhouette in the placing of the figure on the canvas. Strikingly conceived in colour, if artificial, it is effective, with its contrast of hot and cold tones. The large "Portrait of Lord Ligonier" (No. 143)—which measures about nine feet by eight feet—was painted twenty years earlier, and shows Reynolds's power and his fitness for the position of premier official painter. His admiration for Rembrandt, which ill accorded with his personal abilities, is shown in his "Portrait of Dr. Johnson" (No. 887), painted for Thrale in 1772.

Gainsborough's was a case of early and unmistakable ability; it was said of him that he was a confirmed painter at the age of twelve. In any

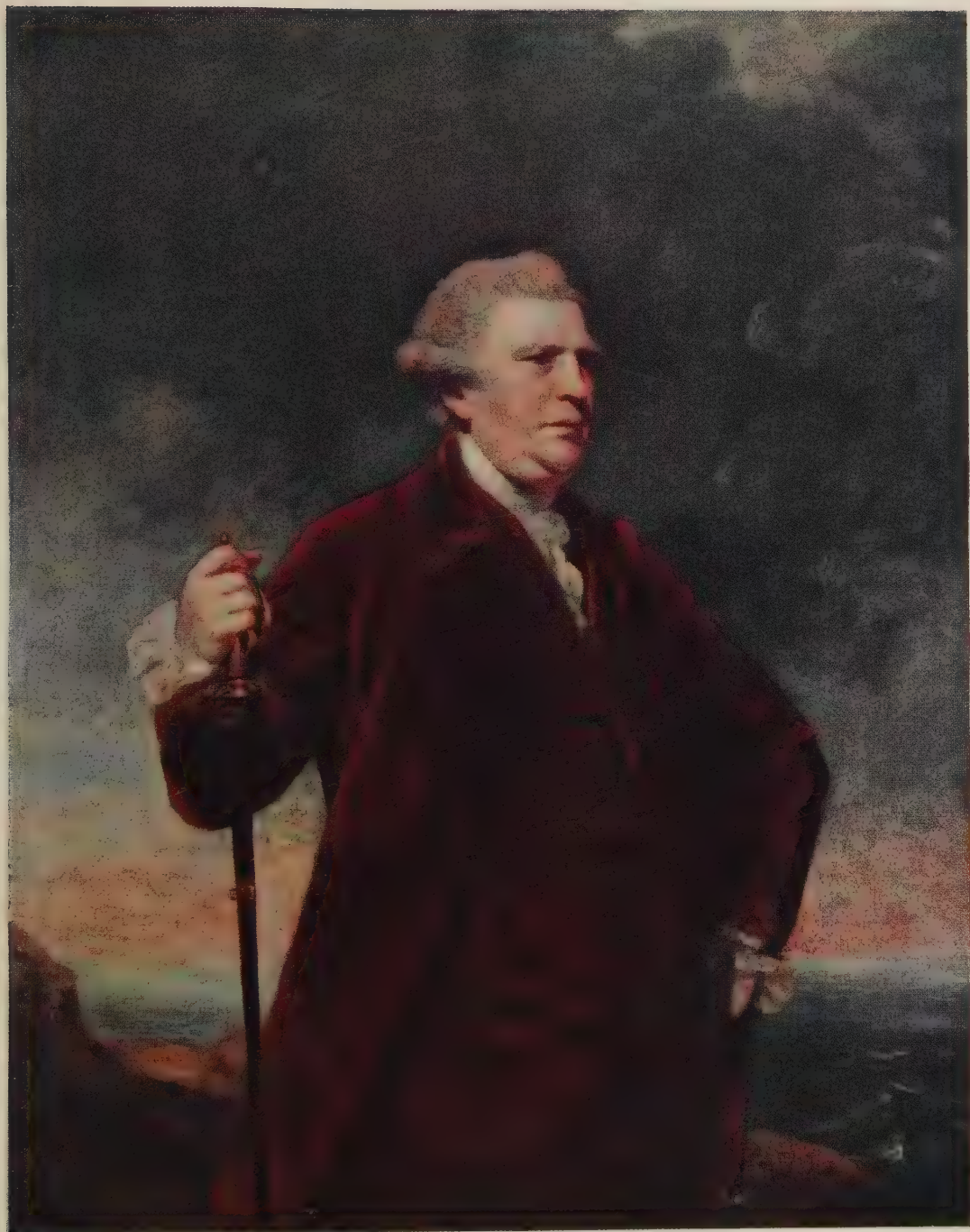


PLATE 3.—ADMIRAL KEPPEL: Reynolds.



ROBINETTA ! Reynolds.

case it appears now that it was the excellent promise shown in the landscape "Wood Scene, Cornard, Suffolk" (No. 925 at Trafalgar Square), that induced his father to send him to London at the age of thirteen. This picture was begun when Gainsborough was still a schoolboy. It was finished in 1748, some seven or eight years later. It is a simple rendering of the country, and painted with a close fidelity. It shows evidence of the Dutch influence that had played so important a part in the making of his early work, but it has no hint of his later free and feathery touch.

In London he met Hubert Gravelot, a French artist, with whom he worked rather as assistant than pupil. Gravelot is said to have introduced him to the Academy in St. Martin's Lane, but there is no evidence that he ever worked there. And Mr. Whitley has disposed of the story that Gainsborough was a pupil of Francis Hayman. He must have known the work of that cold if sound painter, for some of his portraits of the Ipswich period show something of his influence.

Gainsborough set up a studio in Hatton Garden in 1774, but he appears to have been dissatisfied with his progress in London. Returning to Sudbury in the following year, he married, and shortly settled in Ipswich. The two small landscapes (Nos. 1,485 and 1,486) are not fine examples of his manner at this period; they are somewhat literal and rather Dutch in style.

Gainsborough's work can be readily divided into three periods: the Ipswich period, 1745-60; the Bath, 1760-74; the London, 1774 to his death fourteen years later.

The first and strongest influence of the early period was that of the Dutch painter Wynants (1620-82); he was also influenced, though less strongly, by Hogarth and Wilson and, to a less extent, by Hayman.

The delightful study of "The Painter's Daughters" (No. 1,811 at Trafalgar Square), painted about 1755, also belongs to this period.

Late in 1759 Gainsborough sold his furniture and many of his pictures at Ipswich and moved to Bath.

Bath was then the centre of fashion and frivolity, and it was probably the persuasion of his friend Philip Thicknesse, who had a house there, that prevailed upon the painter to try his fortunes in the gay western city. From Ipswich to Bath was a somewhat extreme change, and the effect on Gainsborough's art was soon apparent.

The Bath period is not well represented in the Gallery, but it includes the famous and popular picture of "The Parish Clerk" (No. 670), a portrait of Edward Orpin, parish clerk of Bradford-on-Avon. This

was painted at Shockerwick, a few miles from Bath, when Gainsborough used to stay with his friend Walter Wiltshire, the Bath carrier, who was elected mayor of that city in 1772. His collection was sold at Christie's in 1867, when "The Parish Clerk" was bought for 310 guineas for the National Gallery. Although somewhat sentimental, this picture still has the simple sincerity of Gainsborough's work with a new and easy freedom of handling. But "The Harvest Wagon," which was in the same sale, shows that his landscape work had lost something that was vital, and had acquired a certain artificiality. "The Harvest Wagon" had been given by the artist to Wiltshire, who had presented him with the grey horse shown in the picture.

The little study of "Abel Moysey" (No. 678)—son of the doctor who attended Margaret Gainsborough in 1771—and the portrait of Dr. Schomberg (No. 684 at Trafalgar Square) belong to the Bath period.

In Bath a new influence made itself felt on the painter's work. In East Anglia he had known the Dutch painters, but the more cosmopolitan society of Bath collected Rubens and Van Dyck. These two masters had an immediate effect on Gainsborough; the influence of Van Dyck, whom he always loved, grew in power until it became the dominating influence of the London period. He had known Van Dyck before, but Rubens was a new experience.

The former influence is apparent in "The Blue Boy," which may have been painted at Bath about 1770. The date is uncertain. The subject is Jonathan Buttall, the son of a wealthy ironmonger of Soho. It is a *tour de force* and an attractive example of Gainsborough's virtuosity, but not one of his great pictures. The truth of the popular story that it was painted as a reply to a declaration of Sir Joshua's that it was impossible to paint a fine picture with blue as the predominant colour is at least doubtful, but if Reynolds ever made such a statement it would be remarkable evidence of the hide-bound nature of the academic mind. Like the portrait of Madame Giovanna Bacelli, the Italian dancer, of 1782, "The Blue Boy" was what might be called a "stunt" picture; attractive and brilliantly clever but superficial.

The "Portrait of Mrs. Siddons" (No. 683 at Trafalgar Square), with all its grace and elegance, has something of the same superficial quality. It would be interesting to compare it with a fine portrait by Goya of the same period.

"Musidora" (No. 308), painted fairly early in the London period, has more genuine feeling and more reserve. It is unusually warm in

colour. The legend that Lady Hamilton sat for the picture seems to have no foundation in fact.

Gainsborough left Bath in a hurry early in 1774, riding the grey horse given to him by his friend Wiltshire, the owner of "The Parish Clerk." He took the western half of Schomberg House in Pall Mall at a rent of £150 a year. There he painted most of his later pictures, and there he probably held exhibitions after his quarrel with the Academy in 1783.

On the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 he had been nominated one of the original members, and he exhibited there regularly from 1769 to 1783. In the latter year he exhibited twenty-six paintings. From that date he ceased to exhibit there owing to a dispute over the hanging of his portrait of Lady Horatia Waldegrave. The Academy had no effect on his art, although it may have increased his output.

"The Watering Place" (No. 109), painted about 1775, soon after his arrival in London, shows how far he had gone since his Ipswich days. But his experience, so far as landscape was concerned, had been made through the study of other painters rather than by the direct study of nature. In Bath his life had been more sophisticated; his time had been occupied in meeting the demands for portraits. "The Watering Place," with its deep rich colour and its robust quality of paint, may show, chiefly, the influence of Rubens. It is superior to the rather flimsy "Harvest Wagon," but far removed from the simple, sincere, almost artless records of nature which constituted his early landscapes.

Something of Gainsborough's attractive disposition finds expression in his work—not in the "important" conventional or official portraits, but in those more intimate pieces which he painted to please himself. We regard him at times even with a feeling of personal affection; a feeling never inspired in us by Reynolds nor by Romney, the third of the famous trio.

George Romney (1734-1802) was in every way inferior to the other two. At his best he painted attractive portraits of pretty women, rather superficial as expressions of character, but broadly painted and well placed on the canvas. His large group of "The Beaumont Family" (No. 3,400 at Trafalgar Square) is an exceptional work, and probably his most important production. It is adequate if rather prosaic as a presentation of character, but it showed Romney's special gift for painting textures and materials.

Romney was born at Beckside, near Dalton-in-Furness. At the age



PLATE 4.—THE PARISH CLERK : Gainsborough.



JACOB MORLAND OF CAPPLETHWAITE : Romney.

of twenty-one he was working at Kendal under Christopher Steele, a local painter. He first visited London in 1762; then travelled to Paris (1764), Kendal (1767), and Italy (1773-75), before settling in Cavendish Square, where he developed a connection and acquired a popularity which rivalled those of Sir Joshua. Romney is not seen at his best in the Tate Gallery. The little early portrait of "Jacob Morland of Capplethwaite" (No. 1,906), painted about 1763 (or probably earlier), has an interest as showing the nature of his early work. It has qualities which are probably the qualities of English artists—the qualities they possess before contact with continental art changes their outlook and modifies their practice. It is cold and literal, very direct and very sincere. It has a close relationship with the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, though it is much clumsier. It shows the interest in the thing itself, and practically no interest in the plastic expression of it. And that is fundamentally a characteristic quality (or failing) of English art. Some trace of these qualities persists in the "Portraits of Mr. and Mrs. William Lindow" (No. 1,396), painted in 1772, just before he went to Italy. But if the materials are painted with some distinction, the faces are clumsy and poorly painted, without anything of the freedom of touch which marked his later work. The "Portrait of William Pitt, the younger" (No. 2,280), is very different; it is very attractive in colour, almost pretty, but there is a characteristic lack of grip and a too easily contented perception. Romney sacrificed his early sincerity for a too facile attractiveness. In the "Portrait of Mrs. Mark Currie" (No. 1,651), painted in 1789, he is seen at his worst. It is a positively bad picture, with not one quality to recommend it.

The Scottish painter, Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823), although he is not numbered with the three most fashionable painters of the eighteenth century, was a better artist and much more efficient painter than Romney. His technique is also sounder than Reynolds's, and his pictures have worn remarkably well; where Sir Joshua has faded, Raeburn appears to be as fresh as ever. He met the exigencies of portrait painting by inventing a certain crisp and almost angular manner which was something new and which had all the appearance of strength. Sargent, the great portrait painter of the nineteenth century, adapted Raeburn's methods to his own purposes and to great effect.

At Millbank, Raeburn is poorly represented by only one portrait, "Lady Dalrymple" (No. 2,648). To see him at his best one must visit Edinburgh or seek out certain notable examples in English private collections. His power of simplification of tones is remarkably effective if



LADY DALRYMPLE : Raeburn

sometimes a little superficial. It was admirably qualified to meet the demands of portraiture in which the highest art was not the primary consideration.

Another Scottish painter, Allan Ramsay (1713-84), has not yet received the recognition which he deserved. He was the son of the Scottish poet, and had an unusual training. He worked at first under Hans Huyssing, a Swedish painter in London, and then in Italy under Francesco Solimena and Imperiale, but his work does not show any markedly foreign influence. He had a subtle appreciation of character, and a refined and personal sense of colour. He had some official success as Painter-in-Ordinary to George IV. He also must be studied in Edinburgh. The one portrait in the Tate Gallery, "Mrs. Everard" (No. 1491), is a poor example, and probably the work of a pupil.

George Morland (1763-1804) was only incidentally a portrait painter. He was peculiarly English, both in the subjects he liked to paint and in his direct manner of painting them. His interests were varied, but he preferred to paint sporting subjects with animals, and scenes in ale-houses both in town and country. He was a son of Henry Robert Morland (?1730-97), a portrait painter, and his mother was probably a Frenchwoman. H. R. Morland worked mostly in crayons, but he is represented by two fanciful portraits in oils, both called "The Laundry Maid" (Nos. 1,402 and 1,403), which are somewhat hard and cold, but show a certain personal taste in colour. His son George had a much wider range and a greater facility. He was especially influenced by George Stubbs (1724-1806), the great animal painter and head of that peculiarly English group of animal painters which is, unfortunately, not yet represented in the Tate Gallery. The one example there of Stubbs's work, "Gentleman holding his Horse" (No. 1,452), is scarcely typical, but it gives some hint of his ability. He had the English vision, which is direct, literal, and sincere, but in his case it was united with an innate sense of style.

It is a curious thing that the work of the world-famous portrait painters of the eighteenth-century England does not appear to have had within it the seeds of future and further development. Gainsborough's work was personal; Reynolds's was eclectic and derived from abroad; Romney, even at his best, was neither original nor profound. None of them had discovered any new truths or any fresh way of regarding nature. After them the decline was fairly rapid down to a deluge of mediocrity. The descent was undoubtedly initiated by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830).



LANDSCAPE—GENTLEMAN HOLDING HIS HORSE : G. Stubbs.

Lawrence was a remarkably talented and gifted painter with an attractive personality which made for success. In many ways his career resembles that of Millais. Like the latter, he was very precocious ; like Millais, too, his work declined rapidly in artistic quality ; at the age of ten he was working as a portrait painter in crayons at Oxford—from there he went to Bath and had an extraordinary success. At the age of eighteen he moved to London. Four years later, on November 10, 1791, he was elected a Supplemental Associate of the Royal Academy—an appointment which had never been made before—full Academician in 1794, and in 1820 he succeeded Sir Benjamin West as President. At its best his work had that easy facility and superficial charm which are so attractive and so misleading. Many of his portraits, such as “ Kemble as Hamlet ” (No. 142) and “ Benjamin West ” (No. 136) on a large scale, are dull and undistinguished.

His portrait of “ Mrs. Frances Robertson ” (No. 136) is so commonplace as to make it appear incredible that his work could ever have had such a vogue or such an influence on his contemporaries as actually it

did have. At moments, as in the full-length "Portrait of Queen Charlotte" (No. 4,257 at Trafalgar Square), he could rise to greater heights, and then he combined a seriousness of perception with the sense of style which he had by nature.

The truth is that the *successful* portrait painter has no time to produce works of great art. He has to manufacture portraits, and to do so he has got to evolve a definite method of presentation which he can apply with the least possible effort. Many a man has started as an artist and ended as a portrait painter. In Lawrence's average work there was neither truth nor profundity, and his contemporaries tried to imitate his superficially attractive qualities: his facility and that bright appearance (which reappeared later in Landseer's work) which, whether they were easy or not, certainly took the eye and gained the price.

Portrait painting reached its lowest level when triviality and literal imitation were combined with dullness in the work of such painters as H. W. Pickersgill (1782-1875), "Portrait of Robert Vernon" (No. 416), and J. C. Horsley (1817-1903), "Martin H. Colnaghi" (No. 2,286).

One must not forget some excellent painters who came to England from America. Though J. S. Copley (1737-1815) had been born in Boston, U.S.A., his father was an Englishman and his mother Irish. He left America in 1774 to visit Italy, and finally settled in London at the end of 1775. He was elected A.R.A. in 1776, and R.A. 1779. He had a fondness for painting portraits in large groups. His style was broad and vigorous, and he had a gift for effective grouping which had in it something original. His compositions were artificial and rather theatrical. Truth to effect—to light and atmosphere, etc.—at a given moment had never been thought of. That was to be attempted later with the Barbizon School in France, and to be realized by the French Impressionists.

"The Death of Major Pierson" (No. 733) is a good example of his work. It is strongly dramatic in composition, and, if essentially academic, has a breadth of handling and directness of treatment.

His compatriot, Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), was a better artist and a charming painter. His parents were Scottish people settled at Narragansett in Rhode Island. He had great success as a portrait painter both in London and Paris. He had many distinguished sitters, including Louis XVI., George III., and George IV. when Prince of Wales. In America he had painted the portraits of no less than six presidents. Stuart's work is remarkably modern in feeling. He had no academic formula, but treated each sitter as a definite problem, consequently his portraits have

great variety and individuality, with a delightful freshness of colouring which was most unusual at the time.

There were, of course, many lesser painters who, while showing individuality, added nothing essentially new to the convention which they followed. Sir William Beechey (1753-1839) produced pretty portraits which had a certain gracious aspect, while John Hoppner (?1758-1810), a man of German parentage, though he had some success at Court, had a dullness which, combined with a rather heavy prettiness, has inevitably placed his pictures in a very minor category. But Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), a foreigner born at Ratisbon, had a distinction of style which the others lacked. He turned it to good account in those small portrait groups, frequently of actors, by which he is now best known.

III

BLAKE AND HIS FOLLOWERS

AGAINST the background of material realism of the period the strange figure of William Blake (1757-1827) stands out with startling distinction. At any time he would have been a notable phenomenon. Less startling perhaps now than then, for the artistic background of to-day is much more variegated. Into the ever-changing kaleidoscope which is modern art, Blake's personality might have merged. But even that is doubtful, for Blake was many-sided, and expressed his convictions with a sincerity which is no commoner to-day than it has ever been.

Blake has been described as many things ; as poet, painter, dreamer, visionary, madman. Perhaps he was a blend of all these things. Certainly there can be no adequate study of any of his activities without a reference to his whole personality. And it is important to bear this in mind in considering his pictorial work, for Blake was not a painter in the ordinary sense of the word.

A painter finds the material for his pictures in the character of natural things and in the effects of nature ; he expresses his reactions to nature and the emotions they arouse in him. But Blake was actually impeded by nature. He confesses that " natural objects always did, and do now, weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in me." He was a visionary who set himself the hopeless task of expressing abstractions by means of form and colour. He could do it only by using natural forms, but in his use of them they are only symbols, and have hardly ever anything of the essential beauty of nature.

His pictures rarely have the quality of fine painting, although they invariably have beauty of design and imagination.

Blake's was an ingrowing temperament, feeding on itself, and apparently inexhaustible.

He was notably different from another imaginative painter of a slightly later period.

Turner's imagination received its impulse from the contemplation

of nature, and if at times he started to paint an abstract subject, or one which was literary in inspiration, he turned to nature for its expression. There was always a natural repercussion in Turner's case.

Other painters have tried to paint abstract ideas. G. F. Watts, for example, and Charles Sims, just before his death. In Watts's case the impulse was purely intellectual and ethical; his work was not the expression of passionate belief. Sims's was only pictorially symbolic, not deeply convincing. The inevitable weakness of the attempt lies in the fact that only with the consent of the spectator can the pictures represent what the painter has intended they should represent.

Blake came nearer to success in this particular direction than any of his successors.

His symbols were more than intellectual. They were conceived in no cold spirit, but were very real to him, and embodied, at least to his own satisfaction, the forces and qualities which played their parts in the drama of his dreams, and so he was able at moments to imbue the pictorial representations of his visions with an air of strange reality.

He had a remarkable capacity for expressing such states of mind as horror—he achieves this, for example, in "The Pit of Disease" (No. 3,362)—or of serenity and a kind of unearthly beauty in "Beatrice addressing Dante from the Car" (No. 3,369). Both these drawings are illustrations of Dante.

He himself was apparently not conscious of any of his deficiencies as an artist. It is possible that he even made a virtue of his weakness. For his sense of obliteration in the presence of nature was a weakness and the cry of inability—at least in one direction.

But the spirit had said to him, "Blake, be an artist and nothing else." He accepted the divine injunction, and adopted a conventional pseudo-Michelangelo style of drawing which, if it produced nothing that had intrinsic beauty, at least served his purpose.

Blake was born in London at 28 Broad Street, Golden Square, on November 28, 1757. His father, who was a hosier, was able and willing to help him to follow his bent, for at the age of ten he was sent to Par's School in the Strand. He had shown already that he was an unusual child and beset by visions. At the age of four he was scared by God's face which he had seen at a window, and on one occasion he was chastised for declaring that he had met the prophet Ezekiel.

While at Par's School he drew from the antique and showed the originality of his tastes by buying prints after Raphael, Michelangelo,

Giulio Romano, and Dürer, artists who were not then fashionable. Later on he inveighed against the works of Titian, Rembrandt, Correggio, and Rubens, whom he described as "a most outrageous demon." He wrote verse at the age of twelve; he was only fourteen when he wrote the poem beginning:

"How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the Summer's pride . . ."

And at that age he was apprenticed to James Basire, the engraver, and learnt the craft which afterwards was to be the mainstay of his existence. Basire set him to draw monuments in Westminster Abbey, an occupation which seems to have given him pleasure.

These sculptures, being complete and finite things, did not have the hampering effect on his imagination that he experienced when drawing from nature.

In 1778 he was a student at the Royal Academy, and then discovered his deficiencies and the limiting effect that the model had on him. He despised models, although he held, with the Greeks, that the human form was the supreme subject of the greatest art, and his few attempts from nature were weak and without substance.

He began to engrave regularly for the booksellers, translating, among others, the designs of Stothard, who became his friend. About this time he was introduced to Flaxman, for whom he had so great an admiration as to amount to reverence, which may seem rather strange in these days when the frozen art of Flaxman no longer gives satisfaction.

"Glad Day," one of the most delightful of Blake's designs and one of the most successful expressions of feeling, was produced in 1780, the year in which he first exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Two years later he married Catherine Boucher, the daughter of a market gardener of Battersea. She was quite illiterate, but was a devoted friend and wife, and helped Blake in many ways with the production of his books and learnt to make designs herself. They lived at 23 Green Street, Leicester Fields. The necessities of life becoming more pressing, they joined with Parker, an engraver, and Blake's brother Robert, in opening a print shop in Broad Street, Golden Square, in 1784.

The exact date of the beautiful water-colour of "Oberon, Titania, and Puck, with Fairies dancing" (No. 2,686), is not known, but it must have been an early work, probably previous to 1800.



THE SPIRITUAL FORM OF NELSON GUIDING LEVIATHAN : Blake

In it the lyrical spirit of the earlier poems is translated into design with a certain gaiety and lightness of spirit. This drawing has the quality of rhythm more truly than any of the works of modern painters who hopefully boast of it, but in whose pictures it can be discovered only by the initiated.

"David delivered out of Many Waters" (No. 2,230) must also be one of the earlier works. It is one of the strangest and most original of his designs, effective in spite of its poor drawing, and lovely in colour.

Robert died in 1787; the shop was given up and the Blakes removed to 28 Poland Street. There Blake wrote his *Songs of Innocence*, the most delightful of his books, through which his understanding of children shines so clearly. As he could not find a publisher he set to work to produce it by a method of his own. He wrote his verses backward on a metal plate, ornamented them with drawings, and then ate away the exposed metal with acid. The plates were printed in a light ink, and coloured by Blake and his wife. The result was an exquisite mingling of words and design. *Songs of Experience* followed five years later. Throughout his life Blake lived and worked in great poverty, but his needs were few and he was fortunate in his friends, some of whom, such as Thomas Butts and John Linnell, were also sympathetic patrons.

Blake now began to paint in a kind of tempera, using glue instead of yolk of egg.

The two strange pictures, "The Spiritual Form of Pitt guiding Behemoth" (No. 1,110) and "The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding Leviathan" (No. 3,006), were painted in this medium. The former picture is dated 1808. It was in the exhibition which Blake held in 1809 when he had ceased to exhibit at the Academy; he had shown his "Last Judgment" there the preceding year. "The Spiritual Form of Nelson" is a companion picture to the "Pitt"; it is not signed or dated, but must have been painted at the same time. It is a curiosity, perhaps even an absurdity. As a work of art it is intricate but not admirable, though it has a certain dull decorative effect. The *spiritual* form of Nelson is certainly not familiar to us, but there is nothing about the painting that is significant of Nelson. It might be called "America gone Dry" or "The Slave's Dream." It represents a nude figure very poorly drawn, with other nude figures and a gigantic serpent whirling around him. A little fire burns behind him, and a black slave, unable to bear the sight, grovels at his feet. The execution is poor and uninspired. The colour is dull, and in its present state quite negative. It has absolutely no

value as a work of art, but it is a human document and evidence of Blake's state of mind under the influence of Swedenborgianism.

Blake's strongest gift, that of design, has failed in this case. This painting and the "Pitt," which represents him at the Trafalgar Square Gallery, show the ridiculous side of Blake's pictorial efforts.

Apparently previous to these pictures, I would suggest about 1807, there is another tempera painting, "Bathsheba at the Bath" (No. 3,007). This is a singularly poor painting. It may have for some the charm of old vague things, but it is a poor conception for so definitely assertive a person as Blake. Two of his most satisfactory pictures are "Satan smiting Job with Sore Boils" (No. 3,340) and "The Bard" (No. 3,551). The form is clear cut and crystal in expression. It must date before the "Pitt" and the "Nelson," perhaps about 1806.

"The Bard" is vague but suggestive; probably vaguer now than when it was painted. In "Satan smiting Job" the execution is meticulous, almost minute, but the design is big and free. There is a lack of freedom in the execution, such as one might expect in a man without talent. Yet Satan is a tremendous conception, and the kneeling figure of Job is not without pathos. Satan with his outspread red wings, which suggest a momentary descent to inflict torture—a momentary pause in unending devilment—is certainly an unearthly figure full of horror; a feeling which Blake had a special gift for expressing. It is in perfect condition, although one of his tempera paintings. It was this side of Blake's technique that George Richmond imitated in his pedestrian manner.

"The Bard" (No. 3,551) has a certain vague charm, but whatever clarity it may have possessed in 1809 when it was painted has long since disappeared. It is now an obscure, dark vision, but decorative in its subdued browns and old gold. The ancient Bard is "weaving the winding sheet of Edward's race by means of sound and spiritual music." He is supposed to be standing on Snowdon cursing King Edward and Queen Eleanor below. The river Conway flows beneath. The armies of Edward are supposed to be winding their way among the mountains. All this must be taken on trust, for the picture is now nothing but a vague but pleasantly elusive decoration. Such is the fate of bad technicians. Blake's invented mediums, though ingenious, were not often sound.

To go back a little, in 1791 the bookseller Johnson had introduced Blake to Fuseli, who, though a definitely limited artist, became a sincere follower. And what was probably of more importance, the same year Thomas Butts became Blake's patron.

In 1793 the artist moved to Hercules Buildings in Lambeth. There he produced five hundred and thirty-seven illustrations to *Young's Night Thoughts*. Seven years later his friend Flaxman introduced him to Hayley, and Blake went for a time to Felpham. There he was face to face with nature, and produced, among other indifferent things, a piteously ineffective landscape which is exhibited (No. 3,694). He soon tired of the country with its, for him, lack of inspiration, and in 1803 he was settled at 17 South Molton Street. There Cromek employed him to illustrate Blair's *Grave*, and the *Canterbury Pilgrims* was produced. This work was described by Blake as a fresco. It was a water-colour done on a plaster ground, which was stuck on to canvas or panel.

In 1818 Blake met a new and most useful friend, John Linnell, the painter, and through him John Varley, George Richmond, Samuel Palmer, and Oliver Finch. That was the year of the Visionary Heads or "Spiritual Portraits"—a strange collection. And two years later he made twenty drawings to illustrate Phillips's *Pastorals* which Thornton had introduced into his *Virgil Reading*. Blake cut seventeen blocks himself; the only woodcuts he ever made. These were issued in 1814. In 1820 he moved again. This time to 3 Fountain Court, Strand, where he made the famous drawings and engravings for the *Book of Job*.

In 1824, when Blake was sixty-seven years of age, Linnell commissioned him to make illustrations to Dante's *Divina Commedia*. He was still at work on the designs for the *Book of Job*, but the new commission ensured him a means of livelihood for his declining years. Linnell gave him a folio of a hundred pages, and arranged to pay him £2 or £3 a week as he wanted money. Though enfeebled by declining years, Blake accepted the task with enthusiasm, learning Italian for the better understanding of his subject. He made about a hundred and two drawings, in various stages; many of them were left unfinished. He lived to engrave only seven, which were published in 1827. They present very vivid evidence of the extent of his imagination.

Though the execution is childish, the force of his imagination gets through in spite of it. His special capacity for expressing horror and misery is here most eloquently revealed. But really it was not only horror that he portrayed in these drawings, he expressed every note in the gamut of human suffering.

It was a curious thing that this seer, this inventive genius, who all his life had had to struggle with poverty, and was forced to invent a means by which he could publish to a reluctant world poems of rare

beauty which are unique in the English language, should have been offered almost, if not literally, on his death-bed, a means of epitomizing his inexhaustible imagination. Twenty of the drawings he produced were secured for the nation, and are exhibited in this Gallery (Nos. 3,351-3,370).

The drawings speak for themselves better than words can, except, perhaps, Blake's own words, which is a remarkable testimony to Blake's imaginative gifts, considering the limitations of his technique in every direction except design.

For an example of the variety of feeling or mood expressed one may contrast the drawing of "Homer and the Ancient Poets" (No. 3,353), with its serene atmosphere in which queer things happen, with the hopeless misery of those "Primeval Giants sunk in the Soil" (No. 3,363) or the foul horror of "The Pit of Disease" (No. 3,362). Or one may turn from the sense of unending torture in "The Simoniac Pope" (No. 3,357) to the joy of the rainbow vision of "Beatrice addressing Dante from the Car" (No. 3,369).

Before this work was finished Blake died at Fountain Court on August 12, 1827.

With such an attractive personality, compact of widely differing qualities, Blake inevitably attracted a certain number of devoted followers. If their number was small, their devotion made up for it.

His aspect was fierce and shrewd; there was nothing dreamy about that visionary with the imposing brow. But the expression of his eyes, which seemed always to be seeing visions, could melt in a moment to tenderness. Though he dwelt with a mind apart and remote from the things of this world, he had the quality of loyalty, and his friends, once made, were his for life. His wife had only one complaint to make: that she saw too little of him.

The child in him gave him a sweet understanding of little children, and his compassion for the inarticulate made him love animals.

Inevitably the young artists, and others not so young, who were drawn to him, succumbed to the force of his personality, and in some cases tried to imitate him—not always with the happiest results.

He had three definite followers: Edward Calvert, Samuel Palmer, and George Richmond. They foreshadowed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and called themselves "The Ancients."

Flaxman, Romney, Stothard, and Fuseli, though they were devoted friends and admirers, were all older than Blake, and although they were

influenced—particularly Fuseli—the influence was not radical or profound.

Samuel Palmer (1805-81) was the most satisfactory of his younger followers. He was also the most deeply influenced. He was introduced to Blake in 1824. Though admiring, and perhaps sharing, something of his master's spirit, he did not disdain nature, but found in it the inspiration for his rich pastoral landscapes. He wavered between English pastoral scenes and ideal classical compositions, which were the result of the two years (1837-39) spent in Italy. He practised etching with special success, his work having a warmth unusual in the productions of that medium. In his case Blake's influence did not lead to imitation; its effect was rather spiritual, and led to a higher seriousness.

Edward Calvert (1799-1883) met Blake about the same time. He was a curious individual who had served some years in the Navy before he left it to study art. He soon fell under the spell of Blake's personality, and he produced many woodcuts and engravings. But his feeble dreams, with their solemn sentiment so sweetly expressed, had little in common with Blake's virility.

George Richmond (1809-96) had more accomplishment and more success in imitating Blake's earlier technique. He had no vision of his own, but his facilities of drawing and painting were greater than his master's. He met Blake through Fuseli, under whom he studied at the Royal Academy. After his visit to Paris in 1828 he married and turned his attention to portrait painting, in the exercise of which art the influence of Blake naturally disappeared. In his picture "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" (No. 1,492) he imitated the technique of Blake's "Satan smiting Job" to perfection. But there is no inspiration, no feeling behind it. It is frozen and unchangeable in its cold efficiency.

IV

CONSTABLE AND THE LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

ONE of the most remarkable events in the history of British art was the development of landscape painting in the latter part of the eighteenth century. That branch of art had been so completely neglected in England that Richard Wilson (1714-82) has been justly called "the Father of British landscape," although Gainsborough had begun to paint landscape at much the same time.

So little was known of Wilson's life that it was generally supposed that he had painted no landscape previous to his visit to Italy. He had already gained some reputation as a portrait painter when in 1749, at the age of thirty-five, he set out for Italy, but that he was already accomplished as a landscape painter is proved by his very able picture, "A View of Dover," an engraving of which by Müller was published on April 8, 1747. The previous year Wilson had himself presented to the Foundling Hospital two little roundels of St. George's Hospital, and the Foundling painted in a rather severe Dutch manner. In any case it was mainly as a portrait painter that Wilson was welcomed in Rome. At Venice he received the encouragement of Zuccarelli, and that and the criticism of C. J. Vernet in Rome, led him to devote the remainder of his life mainly to landscape painting. He came under the influence of Claude and Poussin, whose classical style had dictated the manner of most of the painting done in Rome at the time. Wilson's classical Italian landscapes became very popular, a fact which he found extremely irksome on his return to England when he wished to paint English landscapes in a natural manner. To make a living he had often to repeat his Italian pictures, as the collectors failed to appreciate his more personal renderings of English scenery which were then new and original, and which still seem modern in the best sense. Wilson was indeed a prophet without honour in his own country, and his rugged, direct, and rather uncouth personality ill-fitted him for success with patrons at a time when courtliness of manner counted more than merit. His work, however, was really



VIEW IN ITALY : Wilson.

appreciated and imitated by such masters as Gainsborough, Constable, Crome, and even by Turner in his early days.

Wilson's landscapes, in something of their variety, may be studied in the Gallery, although there is nothing really typical of his English work in its charming and unaffected directness. He is another instance of an artist not being allowed to produce his best by the limitations of the prevailing taste and the exigencies of existence.

It is a case again of "art made tongue-tied by authority."

His largest picture in the collection, "Destruction of Niobe's Children" (No. 110), shows his power, but being something in the nature of a "machine" it is not a fair example of his work as an artist. The original version was painted for the Duke of Bridgewater, who took a dislike to the figures and employed an Italian artist, Platio da Constanza, to alter them, which so incensed Wilson that he immediately painted another version of the subject, brought it to England, and showed it at the first R.A. Exhibition in 1760.

But it is interesting to trace the influence of this picture on Crome's "Slate Quarries."

The same source of influence may also be found in Wilson's "View in Italy" (No. 301), which is a particularly fine example of his Italian work. It is warm in colour and rich in reflected light. It has that quality of envelopment of light which so entranced Crome. And the rocky ground to the right of the picture bears a distinct resemblance, both in style and feeling, to the Norwich master's famous "Slate Quarries." This same quality of light influencing the whole landscape is seen in the two little studies "Rocky River Scene" (No. 1,071), and "River Scene" (No. 267); in the latter picture the characteristic Wilson tree on the left is repeated almost identically in the "Landscape with Quarry" (No. 2,989), a landscape of pearly greys. But Wilson's occasional faults are seen in the "Lake Scene" (No. 2,647), where the over strong yellow of the sky detracts from its luminosity.

Richard Wilson influenced Constable to some extent, but the influence on later landscape painting derives mainly from the latter painter. Turner also was influenced by Wilson, whose effect on the development of his immediate followers seems always to have been a good if not a final one.

The merit of Constable's art lay in his intense love of nature, and, of course, his remarkable ability to express it. This was particularly valuable at the time he was painting. It had a great influence on the course of landscape painting both in England and in France, for Constable was

one of the very few English painters who have played a part in the development of French art. No landscape painter before him had painted nature for its own sake and without reference to the work of other painters or to the prevailing convention.

Even Wilson, in the greater part of his work, had seen nature to some extent through the eyes of others. It was, in fact, the convention he had learnt in Italy which prevented him—through the operation of the collectors—from painting English landscape in his own natural way. Gainsborough, too, had always in his mind an idea of style, but Constable's single idea was to create on canvas his vivid impressions of nature in a way which would give the fullest expression of natural effect. Inevitably he created a style—a style that was new. Crome never entirely freed himself from the strong influence of others.

Constable was twenty years old when Corot was born. Daubigny, whose work in a weak way somewhat resembles Constable's, was born twenty years after Corot. The latter may not have been directly influenced by the English master, but Constable undoubtedly prepared the way for the painters of the Barbizon School.

It was in 1824 that his pictures were shown in Paris. A French dealer who had seen them in London the previous year, when he failed to secure the picture of "The Hay Cart," returned the following year, and by his persistence persuaded the painter to let him take something to Paris. May of that year saw Constable "engaged to get seven pictures of a small size ready for Paris by August. The large ones are to be exhibited in the Louvre. . . ."

Constable's pictures caused a stir in the French capital. The professional critics were annoyed with the artists for admiring them. As his friend William Brockedon wrote, "The French have been forcibly struck by them, and they have created a division in the school of the landscape painters of France." That division resulted in the formation of the Barbizon School.

The significant remark of one of the French observers, "Look at these landscapes by an Englishman—the ground appears to be covered with dew," indicates a certain quality which is characteristic of all Constable's work. This same "dew" annoyed the English academic painters. At the R.A. Exhibition in 1829 Chantrey told Constable that the foreground of one of his pictures was too cold, and taking his palette he smeared asphaltum all over the foreground, while Constable in alarm exclaimed, "There goes all my dew."

One of Constable's chief merits was the introduction of natural colour into landscape painting. It was the convention to paint landscapes in brown—Sir George Beaumont, the amateur and famous collector, recommended the colour of an old Cremona fiddle for the prevailing tone, to which Constable retorted by laying an old fiddle on the green lawn before the house to demonstrate the falsity of this idea.

The fresh and dewy greens, the clear blues of Constable, were considered outrages, but they opened a new field of vision to landscape painters.

Constable was born at Bergholt in the beautiful country of East Anglia, which has produced so many great and distinctively English artists. His "careless boyhood" was passed on the banks of the Stour in those scenes which he afterwards declared "made me an artist." His father was a well-to-do miller who at first regarded with small favour his son's ambition to be a painter. In 1799 he became a student at the Royal Academy, and copied old masters "to acquire execution," for he learnt much from other painters, but in the right way, and not for the purpose of imitation.

Gainsborough influenced him at first, then Wilson, Girtin, and Claude. His sight of Sir George Beaumont's Claude, "Landscape with Figures" (No. 61 at Trafalgar Square), he regarded as one of the most important incidents of his life. Ruysdael as a passing influence came later.

Something of the disfavour in which landscape painting was regarded is reflected in the following anecdote. Constable was made an R.A. in 1829 at the rather advanced age of fifty-three. As was customary he called on the President, Sir Thomas Lawrence, to pay his respects. Lawrence let him see plainly that he considered him extremely fortunate in being elected when there were so many historical painters on the list of candidates. Where are those historical painters now? In the limbo of forgotten things. The unpopularity of landscape that had broken the heart of Wilson made Constable's life difficult, but fortunately his circumstances and his temperament were happier than Wilson's. Constable indeed was blessed with a delightful character and disposition. Something of his cheerful kindness and humanity is reflected in the portrait of him at the age of twenty by David Gardner which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The course of his art may be clearly traced in the pictures at Millbank, although his occasional portrait work is not represented. He was



DEDHAM MILL : Constable.

not skilled at portraiture. His work, though honest and not without character, is clumsy and uneasy.

The charming "Head of a Girl," painted about 1810, at South Kensington, has a most unusual freedom and charm—a rhythmic touch and a limpid eye which Lawrence might have envied.

The earliest example in the Gallery, "Barnes Common" (No. 1,066), painted about 1805, is curiously dry and lacking in freedom considering that the painter was twenty-nine at the time; but Constable was rather late in developing, and did not enter the R.A. Schools until he was twenty-three. The painting of the stage coach in the picture shows something of the lively perception which was characteristic of his later work. But the rest of the picture shows a surprising absence of cleverness. The little picture "A Cornfield with Figures" (No. 1,065) is put at about 1816, though in style it appears to be earlier and much nearer the "Barnes Common."

There is much more freedom in the sketch of "The River Stour, near Flatford Mill" (No. 1,816), painted about 1811. In "Harwich Sea and Lighthouse" (No. 1,276) of 1820, one of his occasional sea-pieces, his colour has become very delicate and cool. Soon after this, in 1821, he began painting quick sketches from nature in Hampstead, and the result of the freedom and familiarity thus acquired is evident in the picture of "Dedham Mill" (No. 2,661), which was painted about 1826 or 1828. This being unfinished affords an interesting insight into his methods at the time. It is painted on a brown ground, of which passages, particularly in the foreground and trees on the right, are left uncovered. He has started to divide the tones rapidly into light and dark green. There is no attempt at further analysis or consciousness of complementary colours. And it is interesting to note that the shape of the trees is not expressed by a line but by the opposing tones of the sky in a truly painter-like manner. It was the sparkling effect of the sun breaking through the clouds and catching the water in the foreground that enraptured the painter. It is all noted with a rapid and sensitive touch, and never reconsidered. The various tones of pearly greys in the sky are thinly painted, although there is some impasto in the lights. The brush follows the form and movement of the clouds. It was a sparkling and quickly changing day such as Constable was especially fond of. He is absorbed in his subject, his one idea being to express an effect of nature as quickly as possible. His technique was responsive and perfectly mastered. The colour is

rather black. The tones have sunk a little, and the brown ground has come through.

"The Glebe Farm" (No. 1,274) is obviously painted about the same time. It shows the method carried to completion—perhaps with some loss of vigour. There is perhaps too much detail. It points the eternal problem of finish—the moment when to leave off. This picture is perhaps carried too far. It is painted on a brown ground, which shows slightly in one or two patches. The impasto in the foreground gives a hint of later methods. There is an instinctive feeling for broken colour, but it is not systematic nor even completely conscious. The passage in the right foreground of a cow drinking from a pool by a little willow is a delightful bit of painting. Constable, as we know, disapproved of brown ground, and that, after all these years, has influenced the general effect of the colour to its detriment. The note of vermilion in the cap of the rather grotesque little girl is a sop to convention.

His use of impasto dated from 1819. It increased in effect, and in the picture of the "Dell in Helmingham Park" (No. 2,660), painted in 1830, three years later than the "Glebe Farm," it finds full play.

This picture, which is painted on coarse canvas, is a close-up view of a detail. Its ingredients are of the slightest: a fallen tree trunk hanging over a pool. It is a bit of impressionism which must have seemed incomprehensible to the critics of the time. It has remarkable breadth of treatment for such a subject. He shows a passionate interest in the tree, and to get the utmost out of it he has painted it in heavy impasto with the free use of the palette knife. The effect he got in that way fascinated him and led possibly to its abuse. So much so that in 1833 he declared, "I have laid down my palette knife, but not till I had cut my own throat with it."

There is no trace of its use in the painting of "Trees near Hampstead Church" (No. 2,659), dated 1829, the year before "The Dell," which is one of the weakest and most elegant of his paintings. Later, in his efforts to get intensity of expression, he was rather free in his use of ultramarine and vermilion. In the remarkable picture of "The Valley Farm, Willy Lott's House" (No. 327), which is dated 1835, he has literally built up a picture with thick paint applied both with the brush and the palette knife. The colour must have faded considerably. One cannot imagine Constable leaving a picture with so much nondescript colour in it, especially as he wrote about it, "I have got my picture into a very beautiful state; I have kept my brightness without my spottiness." "Mr. Vernon called,



PLATE 5.—A CORNFIELD WITH FIGURES: Constable.

and bought it, having never seen it before in any state"—and so it came to the National Collection. It was the only picture sent by Constable to the R.A. Exhibition in 1835. Curiously enough it pleased the newspaper critics.

In this picture there is some evidence of Constable's instinctive feeling for complementary colour. In the distance to the left he has obtained an effect by dragging orange over blue, a method of expression probably never used before for the same purpose.

The picture has one of his finest and most dramatic skies. It was not his last nor his greatest picture, but it does represent his ultimate passionate expression of nature, and one can only regret that one cannot see it in its pristine beauty.

Contemporary with Constable there grew up the famous Norwich School.

John Crome (1768-1821), the founder of the school, was born in Norwich, in a small public-house kept by his father, who was also a journeyman weaver. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed for seven years to Francis Whister, coach and sign painter, and in that way he learnt a certain amount of craft. At the same time he met Robert Ladbrooke, the painter, who was a printer's apprentice, and with him he went sketching in the vicinity of Norwich. Soon after he became a drawing master; his most famous pupils were George Vincent and James Stark. Like most of the East Anglian painters, he copied Dutch and Flemish pictures which he found in the local collections. At the house of Thomas Hanay of Catton he first saw a Hobbema, which he copied. He also became acquainted with Gainsborough's work, and copied his picture of "The Cottage Door." For a time he travelled in a manner which, considering the difficulties of his circumstances, was fairly extensive. He made excursions to Cumberland, to the Wye, and to Hampshire and Weymouth. In 1811 he was in Derbyshire, and three years later he visited Paris. One result of his visit was the picture of the "Boulevard des Italiens," which he painted on his return. He founded the Norwich Society in 1803, and contributed to its first exhibition in 1805 and until the year of his death.

Crome's art is founded on the Dutch School, although he owes much less to Hobbema than his admiration for that not very distinguished painter might lead one to suppose.

His dying words, "Hobbema, my dear Hobbema, how I have loved you!" have often been quoted, but fortunately the influence of the Dutch

master was not very profound and cannot be traced in his finest pictures. He had not the passion for nature that emancipated Constable. His work was always more or less derived from other painters, and he never quite escaped the brown convention. At first he felt the attraction of Wilson, Gainsborough, and Morland. Then for a period, from 1810 to 1820, he experienced the influence of Hobbema and Ruysdael, and finally of Van der Neer. One of his most remarkable pictures is the famous "Slate Quarries" (No. 1,037).

It is difficult to date this picture, but it may have some connection with his visit to Derbyshire in 1811. Although it does show something of Wilson's influence in the painting, it is in many ways a unique production; a remarkable composition, a sort of essay in planes, the land rising ridge on ridge till it meets the sky. One can only speculate on its original colour, as it must have yellowed considerably and lost some of its bluer tones. It is a solid painting, and the masterly use of impasto in some passages in the foreground recalls the work of Constable.

With all its recessions it seems to have no atmosphere, or at least it has no atmosphere that can be breathed. In this it is very unlike the "Mousehold Heath" (No. 689 at Trafalgar Square) with its suggestion of infinite space of sun-suffused air.

All Crome's pictures have darkened considerably, and the colour, always negative, has in many cases become dreary.

Such a picture as the "View of Chapel Fields" is now so discoloured that, although passages of sound painting may be appreciated, it gives no hint of the painter's original perception. The landscape "Near Hingham, Norfolk" (No. 1,504), has suffered less, but its range of colours is so circumscribed that its truth to natural effect can never have been more than elementary.

Old Crome was a scrupulously honest and unaffected painter; English in his sturdy character and lack of pretension, but he was not brilliant. His aims may be summed up in the advice he gave to his eldest son, John Bernay Crome (1794-1842), "John, my boy, paint, but paint for fame; and if your subject is only a pig-stye—dignify it."

Very unlike Crome, both in temperament and style, was John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), the other great master of the Norwich School. He was even more remote from Constable. He had a natural sense of style; it is so essentially part of his work that his use of it seems to be instinctive. It is the instinct of the craftsman, and arises out of his feeling for his material. In this he is unlike Constable, who developed a



SLATE QUARRIES : Crome.

style out of his need of expressing his impressions of nature. Cotman was peculiarly a painter ; without colour he is almost mediocre. His architectural drawings in black and white are dry statements, and compare but poorly with those of Turner, Bonington, and Girtin. But in his painting he shows a very original sense of colour, an instinct for decorative treatment, and a most artistic manner of manipulating his material. Both in oil and water-colour he is distinguished.

His style is particularly beautiful in his oil-paintings of trees. He appreciates their varying characters perfectly, but he uses the qualities—the peculiarities—of their structure in the most decorative manner. It may remotely resemble the conventions of the Chinese or the Persians, but there is nothing conventional in his work nor any loss of natural truth. It was merely a similar instinct.

In the end he was probably a greater artist than Crome ; more brilliant,

more varied, and no less honest in his love of nature. But in this case comparisons are odious, for the one was the complement of the other.

The single oil-painting, "The Drop Gate" (No. 3,632), which represents him at Millbank, is a beautiful example of his work. Although it is not so important as the famous "Willows," which belongs to Mr. Percy M. Turner, it is as fine in quality. It is delightfully warm in colour, and the harmony of the varying tones is close and subtle. It has mellowed, but otherwise it has probably changed very little. The breadth and certainty of its treatment show the fine hand of the master. Cotman had the gift of combining in his work the feeling of perfect spontaneity with the sense of a thing carefully and exactly wrought. No other painter has achieved this union quite so completely.

Cotman's circumstances, though not easy, were less difficult than Crome's. He was born in Norwich when the founder of the school was fourteen years old. His father was a linen-draper who wished his son to follow his business. Fortunately the wishes of the father seldom prevail in such cases, otherwise art would be the poorer through the loss of many of its masters. But parental opposition seems to serve as an effective spur. Conditions were satisfactory enough, the father reluctantly consenting, for young Cotman to be sent to London to study. There for many years he worked at the illustration of architectural subjects, and developed his skill in water-colour painting and etching.

He was prolific, and from 1800 to 1806 he exhibited thirty pictures at the Royal Academy. Shortly after that he was back in his native town and began to exhibit at the Norwich Society. At its exhibitions he showed no less than sixty-seven pictures, several of which were portraits. Remuneration from the sale of pictures was small, and an early marriage made it necessary for him, like Crome and so many others, to give lessons in drawing and painting. In this way he had access to many of the country houses with their collections mostly of Dutch pictures. For a time he copied Wilson and imitated the Dutch, but however deep the influence may have been, it is never obvious in his work, which was always most definitely personal.

He moved from Norwich to Yarmouth, where he met Dawson Turner, a well-known antiquary. It was with Turner that he made a tour in Normandy in 1817. One result was the illustrations to Dawson Turner's *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy*, work which afforded him small scope for his abilities. In 1825, back in Norwich, he was elected



THE DROP GATE : Cotman.

an Associate of the London Society of Painters in Water-colours, which opened out another field for exhibition.

Nine years later, having being appointed teacher of drawing at King's College School, he removed to London.

Like Alfred Stevens he endured some years of this drudgery, a too familiar misuse of talent. His health declined during residence in London, and he died on July 28, 1842.

With these two masters of the Norwich School, Richard Parkes Bonington (1802-28) makes the third of a very interesting trio, who are still shining lights in the English School. Bonington was different from either Crome or Cotman, and his career was remarkable in its brilliance, its success, and its brevity. He was born in the village of Arnold, near Nottingham. His father was a remarkable and rather disreputable character. He succeeded to the post of Governor of Nottingham Gaol, which his father had held before him. But his dissolute habits got him into trouble and he lost his position. He became a drawing master, and painted portraits and landscapes without distinction. In 1818 the family moved to Calais, where the father established a factory for the purpose of making lace. There young Bonington met Louis Francia, the water-colour painter, who, struck by the young man's interest, gave him lessons. This aroused the parental opposition, and the father's violence led Francia to send the son to his friend, M. Morel, at Dunkirk. M. Morel, who was a sympathetic and intelligent amateur, decided to send Bonington to Paris with a letter of introduction to Delacroix, who was but four years his senior. The two young men had a common interest in water-colour, an art which had been neglected in France. Bonington worked in the Louvre and entered the École des Beaux-Arts as a student under Baron Gros. His success was rapid. He had some influence on Delacroix, whose remark, "You are king in your own domain," is eloquent of his admiration.

Bonington was awarded a gold medal at the Salon of 1824, where his work was exhibited with that of Constable, Lawrence, and Copley Fielding. The work of the English painters created a lively sensation. In 1825 he visited London with Delacroix, and the following year he went to Italy, spending most of his time in Venice.

Consumption, from which he had been suffering for some years, increased its hold on him, and, his condition becoming serious, he was rushed to London by his parents, where he died on September 23, 1828, at the early age of twenty-six.

Bonington's work is remarkable for its facile brilliance. He had the distinction of being one of the very few English artists who have influenced French art.

With Delacroix he founded the French Romantic movement. He rivalled Turner and Girtin in his architectural drawings, and, curiously enough, like Watts as a young man, he drew subjects taken from Scott's novels.

His work is scarcely represented at Millbank by the single if brilliant example, the small water-colour of "Cheyne Walk" (No. 1,719), but his work can be adequately studied in the splendid group of his pictures in the Wallace Collection.

The resemblance between him and Delacroix is obvious in his highly romantic figure subjects which are so perfectly represented at Hertford House.

It is interesting to note the strong tendency towards orientalism which later had so great an attraction for Delacroix with its repercussion on Diaz.

Bonington's work is remarkably modern in feeling; it is the personal treatment of a subject without reference to academic convention that imparts a fundamental quality to a work and makes it modern because it is always new. He was very versatile, painting landscapes, sea-scapes, architecture, figure subjects, and occasionally portraits, with equal ability. If his work have a fault, it is an occasional excess of facility which makes it superficial. But the extent and quality of his production during so short a space of time are surely unparalleled in the history of art. From the point of view of art he certainly lived some crowded years of glorious life.

A similar example of tragic brevity, of a brilliant career cut short at the moment of fruition, was that of Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), a Londoner. He was born the same year as Turner, about a month earlier, the son of a rope and cordage manufacturer of Southwark, who died when the boy was eight years old. Girtin had some lessons from a drawing master named Fisher, who lived in Aldersgate, before he was apprenticed to Edward Dayes, the water-colour draughtsman. Their relations were not particularly cordial, and Girtin was imprisoned for refusing to serve his indentures. While still a boy he met Turner, and, like him, was employed to colour engravings for J. R. Smith. They also worked together at the house of the amiable Dr. Thomas Monro in the Adelphi, where they copied Cozens and other artists. They went sketching together on the banks of the Thames and in the neighbourhood of London. Girtin made studies of Canaletto and copied the engravings of Piranesi.



A WARWICKSHIRE LANE : De Wint.

In 1794 he began to exhibit at the Royal Academy, sending a drawing of Ely Cathedral, and two years later he made a tour in the north of England. He disliked social conventions, and travelled north in a collier, mixing and feeding with the crew. On shore he was happiest in inn kitchens. The stories told against him originated mostly with Dayes. The fact that he was a welcome guest at the houses of Lord Hardwicke, the Earl of Essex, Lord Mulgrave, etc., is sufficient to refute them.

He formed a Sketching Society in London which included Cotman, Calcott, Francia, and others.

In 1801 he exhibited an oil-painting, "Bolton Bridge," at the Royal Academy. That was the last time he exhibited there. The following year he went to Paris, where he etched architectural subjects, and on his return he painted some of his Paris views for Covent Garden Theatre. He produced the first panorama of London, which was taken from the top of Albion Mills, south of Blackfriars Bridge. It was exhibited in Castle Street, Leicester Square. Like Bonington, who was born in the year Girtin died, he suffered from consumption, from which disease he died in the Strand on November 9, 1802, at the age of twenty-seven, thus exceeding Bonington's age by one year.

To Girtin is awarded the credit of having invented water-colour painting as a substitute for the tinted drawing. His work is refined and delicate, with unusual breadth. Turner had a great admiration for him, which is expressed in the remark, "Had Tom Girtin lived, I should have starved." This expresses the generous admiration of Turner rather than the truth, for there is no evidence that Girtin possessed the colossal imagination of Turner, which gives him his unique position in the history of art. There are two water-colours in the Gallery, "Landscape" (No. 4,360) and "The Rocking Stone" (No. 4,409), which well represent the quality of his work. The oil-painting "Landscape" (No. 4,196), which is attributed to Barker of Bath, is much more likely to be the work of Girtin or J. R. Cozens.

These painters, with J. M. W. Turner, were the leading lights of the great Landscape School of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although the portrait painters of that period have attained a world-wide renown, the landscape painters were actually more remarkable, and, for the development of art, infinitely more important. The work of the portrait painters, so much over-rated, died with them. No one can say that it has borne fruit, but the work of Constable and Turner has fundamentally influenced the art of to-day both in England and France.



VIEW IN HEREFORDSHIRE—HARVEST; G. R. Lewis.

There were other painters of great though lesser merit working at the same time. The two Cozens were strange people who practised the art of landscape painting in a very personal way. Alexander Cozens (c. 1700–86) was a natural son of Peter the Great. After studying in Italy he settled in England in 1746, where he became drawing master at Eton, and gave lessons to George IV. when Prince of Wales. His son, John Robert Cozens (1752–99), was much more gifted. He went sketching in Switzerland and Italy with the celebrated William Beckford. His work, which they copied at Dr. Monro's, influenced both Turner and Girtin. His water-colours were mostly painted in a pale grey wash, and in them he showed a blend of classical and romantic influences. The "Lake of Albano" (No. 4,408) is a good example of his work.

Thomas Barker of Bath (1769–1847) was an uninspired if solid painter. He never attained to the exquisite delicacy which is revealed in the "Landscape" (No. 4,196), previously mentioned, which is attributed to him.

More attractive is the work of a little known painter, George Robert Lewis (1782–1871), whose landscapes have a very distinctive style. Direct and carefully constructed, they are redeemed from literalness by the charm of their honest simplicity.

The two brothers Sandby are examples of the school of topographical drawing. The younger, Paul Sandby (1725–1809), has been called "the father of English water-colour," although he cannot be said to have progressed very far in the use of the medium. He was, however, superior to his brother Thomas (1721–98), whose work is very literal and even amateurish. But two painters, De Wint and David Cox, carried the work somewhat farther, especially the former. Peter de Wint (1784–1849), born at Stone in Staffordshire, introduced a new breadth and vividness into the use of water-colour. His work in its treatment of masses by simple washes is remarkably modern, but David Cox (1783–1859), also from the Midlands, had a smaller touch. His work derived from Constable, but had a tendency towards triviality.

The early years of the nineteenth century marked the decay of art generally into a species of story-telling or anecdotal painting from which landscape was not exempt. It is seen at its worst in such painters as William Collins (1788–1847), Sir W. A. Calcott (1779–1844), and Birket Foster, the water-colour painter (1825–99). In place of the passionate love of nature which animated the canvases of Constable and Turner, they introduced an interest in trivial incident—the essence of their pictures being a story or event of a more or less literary leaning.

There were, however, some notable exceptions. The vivid brush work of W. J. Müller (1812-45), born at Bristol, the son of a Prussian who became Curator of the Bristol Museum, has not been surpassed for vigorous directness. Like James Holland (1800-70) he was influenced by Bonington, but, unlike him, he had a strong personality which distinguished all his work. A. V. Copley Fielding (1787-1855) experienced the same influence, but was a mediocre painter, in spite of the fact that he had had some success at the Paris Salon of 1824 in company with Constable, Lawrence, and Bonington.

V

TURNER

TURNER was the greatest artist in the English School, and possibly the most imaginative painter of any time. To some extent it may even be said that he suffered from an excess of imagination.

At varying periods all through his life it worked on him (and, in later life, almost like madness), leading him to fruitless efforts to express in painting grandiose conceptions which belonged rather to the realm of literature and could be better expressed by the rhythm of words than by line and colour. Because of his great natural genius the results were not as intolerable as they would have been in the hands of a lesser painter. If John Martin, for example, had attempted to paint "Dido building Carthage," or any other of the Carthaginian visions which haunted Turner with recurring regularity through a greater part of his life, the result would have been as crude and as melodramatic as Martin's own "Destruction of Pompeii."

Such subjects are not the proper material for the painter. The quality of the inspiration which gives birth to them is literary and not plastic. They had a strange fascination for Turner, and led him to some strange lapses which, with all their evidence of imaginative power and pictorial resource, will never be numbered among his greatest works of art.

It was when he was expressing his exquisite perception of the more delicate and more subtle effects of nature, when he was, in fact, purely an artist, that Turner produced his greatest work. Then he was, if not unrivalled, at least unsurpassed.

His "Ship Aground" or "Evening Star" is worth all his mythological subjects, plus his excursions into the Carthaginian Empire.

In his later life abstract thought invades his painting at moments with unfortunate results.

In some respects he was a little like Van Gogh, being periodically attacked by visions which had small relation to reason.

It is difficult, in truth, to maintain that state of mind of quiet reflection,

receptiveness, and alert responsiveness in which great works of art are produced.

Possibly no painter was more prolific than Turner, and the production of a work of more than ordinary sensibility might not unnaturally be followed by a relapse, by way even of recreation, into a state of less exacting attention.

Joseph Mallord William Turner, to give him his full name, was born in circumstances which might seem to be most unpropitious for an artist. It is difficult to decide. There are so many cases of artists spending their youth in conditions which would seem to offer them every advantage, who yet (and it may be for that very reason) have produced little work or little that is enduring. Perhaps it all depends on the extent and quality of the artist's genius. In any case Turner's life, despite the greatness of his initial difficulties, is a record of consistent and steady development.

He was born on April 23, 1775 (he gave this date in a codicil to his will), in the house at 26 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, where his father had a barber's shop.

His father had come from Devonshire ; his mother had died insane. This fact, no doubt, explains the peculiar genius of the artist. It is a question for eugenic experts. In this case the combination, in which the tendency to insanity of the mother was balanced and modified—diluted as it were—by the prosaic sense of the father, had a happy issue.

The youthful Turner was not long in showing his talent, for in 1785, at the age of ten, when he was sent to school in Brentford, he was discovered colouring engravings for the foreman of a distillery there—an unusual foreman, too, perhaps. And a year later, so it is said, he was at work for Pallice, a flower painter, in Soho Academy. His school days seem to have been brief and unsettled ; for although he was sent to Coleman's School at Margate in 1788, the autumn of the same year saw him working for Thomas Malton, the architectural draughtsman. And about that time he coloured prints for J. R. Smith, copied the water-colours of Paul Sandby, and put in backgrounds for the architects William Porden and Thomas Hardwick. Many statements concerning his life at this period cannot be accepted unreservedly, but two drawings, exhibited at Millbank, show the kind of work he was producing. They are water-colour drawings made from engravings : " Folly Bridge and Bacon's Tower " (No. 1A) and " Nuneham Harcourt, near Abingdon " (No. 1B). Both are signed and dated, " W. Turner, 1787." They are

remarkable efforts for a boy of twelve, and the latter drawing already shows considerable skill in handling wash and has a certain atmospheric quality.

The record of Turner's life is best found in his work, much more so than is the case with the majority of artists. We are fortunately able to study it almost in its entirety. He himself provided for that by his magnificent bequest to the nation. He seems to have disliked the idea of parting with his pictures, so that at least half his pictures remained in his possession at his death, and the nation benefited to the extent of securing a hundred finished pictures, about a hundred and eighty-two unfinished, and something over nineteen thousand drawings and sketches. Some of these were first exhibited at the National Gallery in 1856-57, after litigation, which lasted more than five years, had been settled.

The idea of a bequest to the nation seems first to have occurred to Turner in 1831 when he left two pictures, "Sun rising in a Mist" (Exhib. R.A., 1807) and "Dido building Carthage" (Exhib. R.A., 1815), to be hung between "The Seaport: Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" (1648) and "Landscape: Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca" (1648) of Claude—an instance of his rather naïve vanity.

In 1789 Turner entered the Royal Academy Schools, and he is said to have copied in Reynolds's studio, and the same year he was sketching in Oxfordshire. Turner's progress was rapid, and, as can be seen by a study of his early drawings, he quickly acquired delicacy of perception and handling. In that year he drew Wanstead Church which had been built by his friend and employer, Thomas Hardwick.

He travelled considerably throughout his life, and the extent of the journeyings in his young years is remarkable, considering the difficulties of travel in those days for a young man without resources.

His work up to 1793 is marked by a careful delicacy, but in that year he made the acquaintance of Dr. Monro, who had a fine collection of drawings in his house in the Adelphi. There Turner used to gather with certain other young artists, who included Girtin and Varley, to copy drawings by J. R. Cozens and others. That experience and association with the highly gifted Tom Girtin, who, had he lived, might have been his serious rival, led to the development of a broader and richer style, and in the following year, when he undertook his first Midland tour, his work showed, with its usual refinement, a new breadth of handling.

He visited Ely and Lichfield, Warwick, Shrewsbury, and Gloucester, drawing most of the cathedrals he encountered. Later in the year he was in the Isle of Wight, where, possibly, he met Morland, for some of

his water-colours of the time, notably "Sailors getting Pigs on Board" (XXIII. T.), show strongly the influence of that painter. During the early half of his life Turner was very susceptible to the influence of other masters, though he always regarded Claude as his great rival. He had a special admiration for Richard Wilson, which was reflected in some of his earlier oil-paintings. The first evidence of this interest is contained in Sketch Book No. XXVIII. of 1797, known as the Wilson Sketch Book, and which he labelled "Studies for Pictures—Copies of Wilson." There is also a small "View of a Town" (No. 475) about 1798 which might almost be the work of Wilson.

Turner's works in water-colour had been gradually getting broader and more mysterious, and what might be regarded as his first period culminated in the Norham Castle of 1799, and with it came the beginning of success. That was the year of his election as an Associate of the Royal Academy; he became a full Academician in 1802.

Turner had already practised oil-painting, his subjects being still more or less topographical. His first exhibited oil-painting was "Moonlight: a study at Millbank" (No. 459), which was in the Academy exhibition of 1797. The work is fundamentally a drawing rather than a painting, but besides its beauty of drawing there is a certain delicacy of values. Although almost a monochrome, with a few notes of local colour, there is some gradation and a certain glow in the sky. The interesting "Portrait of Himself" (No. 458) was painted about 1798. It is very restricted in colour, but is painted in impasto with a certain amount of freedom. It reveals the awkwardness which Turner always experienced when painting the human figure, and although he has had difficulty with the modelling he has got something of the remarkable expression of eyes which we hear was one of his most striking features. In his large picture of "Buttermere Lake" (No. 460), painted about the same time, he is still far from easy in his use of oil-colour. His wonderful gifts as a colourist have not yet attained complete expression through that medium, and he is still relying on a limited palette of earth colours, although he has achieved a certain subtlety of atmospheric effect. But some two years later, about 1800, he had embarked on an ambitious series of mythological subjects, which were undertaken probably in conscious imitation of Claude. "Æneas with the Sibyl" (No. 463), in the manner of Wilson, was the first of these pictures; it was followed by the "Rizpah" (No. 464).

At this time Turner was turning his attention definitely to the sea. The sketch book (1800-2) "On a Lee Shore" shows something of his

beautiful freedom in drawing the boats which he understood and loved so well. And the attractive little "Sea Piece" (No. 469), about 1802, shows a finer style in the use of oil-colour and an improved sense of colour. So rapid was his development that the great picture of "Calais Pier" (No. 472), which is a culmination of his paintings of fisher subjects, was painted only one year later, in 1803. That was after his foreign tour, with all the new experience he gained by it.

The diversity of his interests—he always cherished an ambition to write poetry—are curiously shown in the Egyptian Details Sketch Book of 1803, in which he has drawn details of Egyptian god and costumes.

The "Dolbadarn" Sketch Book of 1799, which contains some notes on French grammar, seems to show that he was then contemplating a foreign tour. The book also contains "A list of cloathes."

In 1802 he set out on his first foreign tour. He went by Calais to Paris, thence, stopping at Macon and Grenoble, through Switzerland and Strassburg.

In Paris he spent many days at the Louvre. His notes and reflections are preserved in the Louvre Sketch Book (LXXII.). He admired especially Raphael, Titian, Ruysdael and Poussin, Correggio and Giorgione. But he found Rembrandt's "Good Samaritan" "rather monotonous," and he remarks that in his "Landscape with Rainbow" Rubens distorted "what he was ignorant of—natural effect." While Domenichino's "Hercules and Achelous" is "not sufficiently diversified as to colour to create any interest."

That year he had exhibited at the Royal Academy the strongly massed and dark painting of "Jason in search of the Golden Fleece" (No. 471), with its trick of the red note in the approved style. After his return, about 1803, he painted the strange "Holy Family," in which he is so unlike Turner in his efforts to be a combination of Reynolds and Titian. That was the year of the "Calais Pier," another proof of his versatility and the variety of his interests.

For the next few years he was happily occupied with painting the sea, and we get such impressive pictures as "Boats carrying out Anchors" (1804), "The Shipwreck" (No. 476) of 1805, and during the period 1805-10 delightful paintings on the Thames, in which is expressed the last refinement of delicate and nervous brushwork.

The picture known as "The Ford" (No. 2,679) is probably the best of these. In it the delicacy of the perception is matched admirably by the spontaneous and flexible brushwork which expresses the varying

character of the trees without effort and without reconsideration. The unity of drawing and colour is complete. One can return with unfailing pleasure to a close study of this picture, and rejoice to contemplate the drawing, so nervous and so exact, of the horses and carts by the water's edge.

Beautiful as this is, the little picture of "Walton Reach" (No. 2,681) is its equal. This belongs to the same period, but is painted in a different mood and is at once broader and more dramatic. The exact relations of the tones impart that sensation of intimate reality which characterizes the simple sincerity of real impressionist paintings, and the upright notes provided by the sails of the barges are perfectly placed for effective emphasis in the design.

That must have been a time of perfect enjoyment for Turner; that seems to be expressed in the ease and serenity of the pictures of the period.

There are a number of canvases of Thames subjects of this time (about 1807), most of which are mere beginnings, but they show Turner's remarkable power of suggesting a complete scene by a few essentials jotted down, as it were, on an empty canvas.

"The Sun rising through Vapour," part of the challenge to Claude, which is exhibited at Trafalgar Square, was painted in 1807. At one time it belonged to Sir John F. Leicester (Lord de Tabley), who got it in exchange for "The Shipwreck" (No. 476), but Turner bought it back at the De Tabley sale in 1827.

The other picture, "Dido building Carthage" (No. 498), which completes the challenge to Claude, was painted in 1815.

"Bligh Sand" (No. 496), one of the breeziest of Turner's sea pictures, was painted in 1809, the year of his first visit to Petworth, the home of Lord Leconfield, and the beginning of a friendship which resulted in some exquisite works of art.

Turner had resumed his mythological paintings in 1806 when he produced and exhibited the "Goddess of Discord in the Garden of the Hesperides" (No. 477). This picture, which is a remarkable *tour de force*, which is so unlike the essential Turner, was painted under the influence of Poussin, and was no doubt a direct result of his visit to the Louvre. It is a well-balanced composition, academic in conception, and quite conventional in its massive arrangement of chiaroscuro. The figures are surprisingly good for Turner. There is something in it of the imaginative drama of the skies, which he delighted in and painted

so well. The trees are beautiful, and the general tapestry-like quality is not unpleasing.

With similar works, such as "Apollo killing the Python" (No. 488) in the manner of Titian and "Dido and Æneas leaving Carthage" (No. 494), "Appulia in search of Appulus" (No. 495), and others painted in emulation of Claude, it reveals remarkable power and adaptability on Turner's part, and it is clear that he could have rivalled the classical masters on their own ground had he pursued this genre. But fortunately Turner did not stop there. They were, indeed, but an incident in his development, and coincided with his most ardent efforts to write poetry. The essential spirit of Turner was quite different, and did not find true expression until about 1823, sometime after his first visit to Italy. Turner was a born colourist, a rare thing in English painting. By colourist I do not mean an artist who can use colour harmoniously as an adjunct to his other qualities, but one in whom colour is an essential medium of expression; one who feels nature as colour and can only express his true emotional experience by its means. Turner was indeed many-sided, but the Turner in whom, after all these years, one most delights is the lyrical artist responsive to the rarest and most elusive effects of nature, who expresses with exquisite truth the subtlest shade of colour visible to his unusually sensitive perception.

It is significant that he attained to this pure lyrical state towards the end of his life, after a variety of artistic experience and development. Going to the fount of inspiration one can see that the inspiration of his great mythological and similar paintings was literary rather than purely artistic, and although many admirable and painter-like qualities of composition, construction, tone, etc., went to their creation, the results were not purely artistic, as the source—the primary reason for their existence—was not a pure one.

One of the greatest of his naturalistic paintings, before his colour vision was fully developed, was the "Frosty Morning" of 1813. "Crossing the Brook" of 1814-15 carried aerial perspective to a degree of subtlety not reached before, and seemed to foreshadow the coming of the Italian paintings. Both these pictures are at Trafalgar Square.

To go back a few years, Turner had coquetted with the Dutch influence in 1807 when he painted "The Blacksmith's Shop" (No. 478), and in 1809 when he produced "The Garreteer's Petition" (No. 482) and "The Cobbler's Home" (No. 2,055). These were lamentable failures, and were probably attempted out of envy of Wilkie's success with such

subjects, for Turner was an extraordinary mixture of greed, envy, meanness, and extreme generosity. In the year 1807 he conceived the project of the *Liber Studiorum* in a desire to excel his old rival Claude, whose drawings, engraved by Earlom, had been published in a *Liber Veritatis*. He intended the series to be a record of the whole range of his inventive ability. He divided his subjects into historical, mountainous, pastoral, marine, and architectural. He made the drawings mostly in sepia, etched the outlines, and handed the plates over to various engravers. One was produced in aquatint, the remainder were in mezzotint. He had intended to do a hundred plates, but the project was never completed; only seventy plates and one frontispiece were published.

Numerous publications were illustrated by engravings from his drawings during the period from 1814 to 1826, but these works were not of great importance and were quite incidental to his career.

The degree of his production continued unabated, and the intervening years saw the creation of some fine painting. But the next event of importance, and one which may divide the periods of his painting, was his first visit to Italy in 1819. Before his departure he had finished and exhibited the large painting called "England: Richmond Hill, on the Prince Regent's Birthday" (No. 502), one of those rather pompous productions which hover somewhere between the sublime and the ridiculous. One is not sure whether it conceals or reveals a sense of humour. Probably the humour is unintentional, certainly it does not sparkle with obvious enjoyment as it did in the later Petworth drawings done in 1830.

In 1819, then, he started for Italy, going through Paris, the Savoy, and Mont Cenis. He lingered in Turin, visited the Lakes, and proceeded through Milan and Verona to Venice. Finally, he reached Loretto and Rome. From Rome he made various excursions which are recorded in his sketch books.

The first concrete result of his Italian visit was the picture of "The Bay of Baiæ, with Apollo and the Sibyl" (No. 505), exhibited in 1823. This marked a turning-point in his career, for in it the iridescent tones of his water-colours are invading his oils, pure colour is filling his landscape, although the foreground is still marred by heavy brown shadows.

It was a time of transition, and the shadows in Turner's pictures were not made completely subject to the effects of light, and consequently of colour, until the "Mountain Glen" (No. 561) some years later.

The finest period of Turner's work was roughly between the years



PLATE 6.—HASTINGS: Turner.

of 1823 and 1832. That period was inaugurated by the " Bay of Baïæ," which is not one of his greatest pictures, but shows a new colour stimulus and the awakening or perhaps the full release of his unique sense of colour. The delightful paintings of yacht racing at Cowes, and the unsurpassed " Evening Star," " Ship Aground," " Chichester Channel " belong to this period. Turner then showed himself to be a master of mystery, which is one of the most delightful qualities in painting. A picture without mystery is merely a statement of facts. It was Conrad who said, " Explicitness is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion."

He also was a master of technique, and now he adopted new methods in the use of his medium, delighting in a virtuosity which, however, he kept strictly subservient to his main purpose. In the yacht series of 1827 we find a free use of the palette knife and a most artistic quality of paint. " Yacht Racing in the Solent " (No. 1,995) is a lovely example of this. It is full of air and movement, yet the effect is produced in the simplest way and obtained with very few tones. The palette knife is freely used in the painting of the sea. It has the quality of a kind of precious stone.

The degree of movement he obtained was raised to a really remarkable degree in another yacht-racing picture (No. 1,994), and " Shipping at Cowes " (No. 1,998) has a characteristic dreamy effect, mysterious and suggestive, obtained by subtle gradations of colour. This picture is more beautiful than any Corot.

These pictures lead up to those perfect paintings in which his power of expression is at its purest. " The Evening Star " (No. 1,991) is the most beautiful of these. No one has surpassed Turner in his ability to express the atmosphere of a place and of a moment. This picture is composed of the simplest ingredients—a dark sea, a lonely shore, a vast expanse of sky irradiated by the pale afterglow of the sunset. The gleam of the evening star above is reflected in the wet sand near a fisher-boy on his way home with a white dog bounding at his feet. Though the painting is finely subtle the effect is broad and big. The poetry of the moment is perfectly achieved. It is a delight to study the painting of the sky with its infinite variations of colour. The glow from behind the bank of dark clouds which hangs over the horizon, and is broken by notes of a beautiful orange pink, expands and invades the sky and gradually diminishes, catching little clouds with a pale golden light. The hint of a sail on the darkening sea, and the figure of the solitary fisher-boy, do

but accentuate the vast loneliness. Such a sky has never been more finely painted.

The "Ship Aground" comes very near to it for pure beauty, but the effect is not quite so elusive, and there is more "subject" in it.

While he was painting such simple pictures, Turner indulged his passion for the grandiose with "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus" (No. 508), which he exhibited at the R.A. in 1827. The shapes of things in nature—particularly the formation of clouds—suggested figures, and even whole dramas, to Turner. In this way the figure of Polyphemus is made up of the shapes of clouds, and the painter has fully indulged his passion for colour.

In 1829 Turner was at Petworth when he painted the beautiful but unfinished picture of "Chichester Channel" (No. 560) in which the serene melancholy of early evening is so finely expressed.

The following year revealed an unsuspected vein of fun and humour. The delightful little sketches done in water-colour and body-colour on grey paper show his power of suggestion turned to the portrayal of scenes in Petworth House in which figures play an essential part. These figures, though done on a small scale, are full of character and humour.

The remarkable thing is that there is no actual drawing in them—they are suggested by the slightest stroke of the brush—yet they are so full of personality that no doubt they were easily identifiable at the time. Many of them are like chapters from a novel by Jane Austen—they form an amusing combination of comedy and manners.

"Waiting for Dinner" (CCXLIV. 31), although the slightest impression, is instinct with fun and animation. The red-faced squire in the centre is unmistakable, while the drooping but gallant soldier is no less discernible in the red uniform on the right; and No. 86 in the same series, "The Vicar on the Hearth Rug," is a crystalline expression of character and humour.

The development of Turner's water-colour work had proceeded apace. The wonderful "French Rivers" Series were done during the years 1826-33, and by 1839 Turner had reached a height of perfection never before attained in this medium.

Just after 1830 there was a brief period during which his landscape (in oil-painting) was translated into pure colour. At first sight it appears as though the substance of natural objects had disappeared, only colour being left; as though these canvases had been emptied of all content and were but "the stuff that dreams are made on." There is almost

no local colour, only the colour of light and atmosphere, yet there is no difficulty in identifying the subjects. This reduction of natural expression to pure colour has never been achieved more perfectly than in "Norham Castle" (No. 1,981). It is more complete than in the lovely picture of a "Castle on a Bay" (No. 1,985) with its exquisitely drawn trees and its perfect balance of design. In these two pictures and in the "Bridge and Tower" (No. 2,424) Turner has almost translated the technique of oil-painting into that of water-colour.

The aims expressed in these paintings did not satisfy him for long apparently; his other interests—other aspects of nature—again pressed on him. He rarely could entirely omit the human interest from his pictures.

The last period of Turner's oil-painting may be said to have begun about 1840. After that date there were signs of decline. His dreams and visions were taking more frequent possession of his mind. The subjects of his pictures were symptomatic of an unsettled mind, and there were occasional examples of bad workmanship. He had come across Goethe's *Theory of Colour*—he gives one of his pictures that subtitle—and a conscious intellectualism began to supersede his instinctive expression. In place of subtle truth he gave way, at times, to the violence of exaggeration. His "Burial at Sea of Sir David Wilkie" (No. 528) is a striking picture, but its impressiveness is superficial and not lasting. When Stanfield objected to the blackness of the sails Turner replied, "I only wish I had any colour to make them blacker."

But his brush had not lost its power although his mind was no longer capable of the quiet spirit of reflection which had produced the great lyrical pictures. His imaginative power was undiminished but less under control, and it led him to abstract ideas which could scarcely be represented by pictorial means. But his "Snow Storm" (No. 530) and the better known "Rain, Steam, and Speed" (No. 538) have power and method in the midst of confusion, and "Queen Mab's Cave" (No. 548), exhibited in 1846, has something of the old lyrical beauty. The later Venetian pictures, with the exception of "The Sun of Venice" (No. 535) about 1843, were examples of bad workmanship.

Many of them have decayed, leaving but slight evidence of their ephemeral beauty.

He reached a level of the ridiculous in his painting of "War: The Exile and the Rock Limpet" (No. 529), exhibited in 1842.

Curiously enough he had returned to Troy for his last exhibited pictures.

“ The Departure of the Trojan Fleet ” (No. 554), “ Æneas relating his Story to Dido ” (No. 552), and two others of similar subjects, were exhibited in 1850, the year before his death. The old painter retained the queer “ classical ” interest which had always haunted, but fortunately had not dominated, his mind.

On December 19, 1851, he died in the house on Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, which he had kept as a secret refuge from the world, and where he had lived under the name of Booth.

He lies beside Sir Joshua Reynolds in the Crypt of St. Paul’s Cathedral.



PLATE 7.—THE EVENING STAR: Turner.

VI

NINETEENTH-CENTURY GENRE PAINTERS

AFTER the great painters of the eighteenth century there was a general decline in English painting. This was felt even in landscape painting, although painters still had the great living examples of Turner and Constable.

But the former, who died in 1851, was too personal and, in his way, too perfect to have an immediate influence except a bad one, and the time was not ripe for the natural art of Constable, who had died fourteen years previously, to have any profound effect on landscape painting. His influence in France had been almost revolutionary, but the French have always been more receptive of new ideas of plastic expression. The nature of English inspiration in painting was fundamentally different. With a few notable exceptions, its sources have always been more or less literary.

The decline in portraiture had been initiated by the success of Lawrence's brilliant but often meretricious work. He died in 1830, the last of the great portrait painters of that period. But even from the work of the portrait painters the literary interest was seldom absent. It was rarely if ever that the painter was moved primarily by the plastic qualities of his subject. There was scarcely any attempt made to realize truth to nature as represented in the sitter and scene before the painter. One has to wait until later days for the portrait to become an expression of personality in a background or environment which, by its intimate association with the sitter, helped to reveal or to suggest something of essential character.

In the eighteenth century and later such qualities were neither demanded nor supplied. All that was wanted was a flattering likeness with some romantic suggestion. Ladies were frequently portrayed as classical or mythological persons. The moments when they were definitely interested in the personalities of their subjects may be easily detected in the work of Reynolds and Gainsborough.

Literary interest as a motive force is the basis of most English art ; it varies in quality ; it was at its worst in the early years of the nineteenth century, and it is expressed in the vast numbers of genre and anecdotal paintings that dominated the art of the country. It never quite disappeared, and gathered renewed strength in the latter years of the century, and still persists to the present day, although to a somewhat diminished extent.

It was a protest against its poverty, its triviality, and its falseness, that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood came into existence. But the change was to a great extent only in the quality of the literary inspiration. It was not a revelation of artistic expression.

It is, of course, not impossible for a painting, whose subject-matter is illustration or anecdote, to be also a work of art, perhaps even a great work of art. It is a question of the fundamental inspiration and also of the inherent qualities of the painters—a matter of feeling.

Many of the old Dutch and early Italian painters represented scenes which were illustrative or anecdotal. When their pictures have survived as great works it is because they express some emotion aroused in the artist by the contemplation of nature or some deeply religious feeling that has become an essential part of the painter's being.

But the practice of the early nineteenth-century painters was not to proceed from an emotional reaction, but to seek some story or scene out of which they could make a picture. That procedure, so detrimental to painting, is the practice always closely associated and still associated with the Royal Academy.

In the work of these earlier anecdotal painters it is possible to detect mixed inspirations as well as varying qualities of technique. Some are merely painters of anecdote, others combine a certain degree of emotional expression, but none is on a very high level.

It is perhaps interesting to compare four typical examples : " John Knox preaching to the Lords of the Congregation " (No. 894) by Wilkie, " An Incident from Gil Blas " (No. 1,967) by Hurlstone, " Punch, or May Day " (No. 682), by Haydon, " The South Sea Bubble " (No. 432) by E. M. Ward.

The most accomplished of these painters was Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841). He was a precocious student, having worked at the Trustees Academy in Edinburgh at the age of fourteen and at the R.A. Schools, London, six years later. His picture " Village Politicians," shown at the R.A. the following year, established his popularity. At first

he set himself to imitate the Dutch masters, particularly Teniers, and he practised picture making with considerable skill and success. "Village Festival" (No. 122), painted in 1811, is a fair example of his earlier style. A change came over his painting after his visit to Italy and Spain in 1825, when he came under the spell of Velazquez and completely altered his style. The picture of "John Knox Preaching" belongs to the later period, having been painted in 1832. It might be described as historic-anecdotal painting, but, unlike most historical paintings, it has a certain air of reality and plausibility. Its tonality is unreal and its colour is heavily black and brown, but very few artists in those days had any perception of true colour or even regarded it as worth consideration. That came slowly, and was fully realized only when the French Impressionists practised their discoveries. It was one of the reasons—perhaps the chief reason—why Turner, who instinctively felt what the later painters knew, and Constable, who at least attempted natural colour, had so little influence on their contemporaries although they excited admiration.

Wilkie was a brilliant painter; he had the essential touch of the virtuoso and a fine natural style in the use of pigment, but these very qualities tended to make his work superficial, because he was tempted to cultivate them for their own sake. There is always some display of a too obvious cleverness, but, face to face with a figure, he had some sense of its plastic quality, some feeling for its solidity. His expression does not go very deeply, because his sense of the relations of one thing with another are rather coarse and his colour is extremely limited. But one feels that Wilkie might have been a greater artist if he had lived in a later period when painters had emancipated themselves from anecdotal fetters.

If in the Wilkie the subject is largely an excuse for the display of a dexterity of a high order, there is a totally different feeling about Hurlstone's "Incident from Gil Blas." This picture is rather puzzling in a certain sense of conflict one feels when contemplating it. There is a feeling that the painter's natural perception of the scene is restrained by some foreign influence—an influence not fully assimilated. This must have been the result of a visit to Madrid, for he, too, felt the call of Spain and visited that country at the age of forty-two. The head of Sedillo in this picture is borrowed from the "Frate Addormentato" ascribed to Velazquez. Hurlstone's curious dry and dragged method of painting is repeated later in some of Watts's pictures, although the colouring of the latter artist is so very different. Hurlstone is more

modern than Wilkie, and less academic. He was moved by natural effect in a way that never touched Wilkie. There is not the same restraint in his work. His mind is different from that of the older Scottish painter, who inclined more towards a rather exquisite craftsmanship, which, later, is sometimes recalled by Pettie. There is a close-knit pattern and a rhythm in the "Gil Blas"—a directness of observation (evident in the spontaneous way in which the brush marks follow the forms) and an unconventionality of composition—very rare in his day. His colour is queer and highly individual, and some of the flesh tones have faded.

The same painter-like qualities which distinguish the Hurlstone animate the picture of "Punch, or May Day" (No. 682), by B. R. Haydon (1786-1846), painted in 1829. There is breadth of handling and a unity of effect which were not prevalent in most of the anecdotal work of the period. Like all the pictures of the time which represent outdoor scenes, but were painted in the studios, it has falseness of tone and exaggeration of light and shade, but it is well composed, and the different parts are kept well in place. The picture is a scene of contemporary life rather than a story, although amusing incidents are combined in it. It has something of the air of a pageant in the progression of various types. It is truer in colouring (though that does not go very far) and less theatrical in composition and lighting than the Ward, which we shall consider presently. As a commentary, too, it has a certain value and historic interest.

Haydon was a curious character ; never able to find adequate expression. Suffering from academic restraint, he would have benefited by modern discoveries. As it was, he sought in vain for the key, and turned hopelessly towards historic painting and large decoration for a solace which he never found. He finally committed suicide at the age of sixty.

There are several paintings by E. M. Ward (1816-79) in the Gallery. "The South Sea Bubble : a Scene in Change Alley in 1720" (No. 432), is the best, although there is little to choose between them. This picture typifies the practice of the time. It is frankly illustration very well organized and skilfully painted. It has no relation to reality, yet is very plausible in the verisimilitude of individual figures. The composition and the lighting are essentially theatrical. The limelight falls on the centre of the picture, and the groups to the left and right are kept more or less in shadow. But each figure is well portrayed in detail and character, and is kept well in place in relation to the whole. There is no pretence to truth of natural effect as regards tone, colour, and atmosphere. Such things were ignored by the painters of the early nineteenth century.



PUNCH, OR MAY DAY: Haydon.

Its interest lies wholly in the story and the painter's skill, and such interest is fairly soon exhausted. It is not an expression of emotional reaction.

It is possible to multiply instances without getting very much further. The main difference is in the varying incidents painted and in the individual preferences of the painters. Fundamentally the work is on the same lines and proceeds towards the same ends. Indeed the more they differ the more they are the same.

G. S. Newton (1794-1835), W. P. Frith (1819-1909), and C. R. Leslie (1749-1859) are worth mention. The first of these was born in Nova Scotia, and studied under his uncle, Gilbert Stuart. He came to England when quite young, and visited Paris and Italy. He turned to the Old Masters for inspiration rather than to nature, and his work recalls the

Dutch School of the seventeenth century. If he be distinguished at all, it is for his taste in colour and for his reticence.

Frith is well known for his picture of "The Derby Day" (No. 615), which has been transferred to the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square. This picture is full of interest on account of the extraordinary number of incidents it portrays. To paint it at all and to keep a certain unity (as the artist has kept it) required a skill of no mean order. Not only that, but the painter produced a replica of it which is in the Manchester Gallery. The picture is not only an epitome of the scene on the racecourse at Epsom on a Derby Day, it is in a sense a pageant of English life at the period, 1858.

It is almost too dispassionate to be a commentary on life, but has something of the indifference of a photograph.

There is certain gaiety about the work of C. R. Leslie, and a freedom of touch which could suggest detail without actually realizing it. In that his work belongs to a rather later date. Although he was born in London, his parents, who were American, took him to Philadelphia at an early age and apprenticed him to a bookseller. He returned to England when seventeen and studied at the R.A. Schools. At first he painted portraits with a fluent and gracious touch, but he soon turned to literature—to Don Quixote and Shakespeare—for his subjects. He had skill and a certain sparkling quality worthy of a better cause than that of illustration. His son, G. D. Leslie (1835-1921), was a much less gifted painter and became a member of the Royal Academy.

The anecdotal spirit was not directed solely to literature or to scenes of human activity. It invaded the dumb animal kingdom, and through the adroit brush of Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-73) began to endow the members of that kingdom with the less desirable characteristics of the superior beings. Landseer's is a case of fleeting popularity—one of many. Although in his day, under the less burning light of criticism and the more leisurely march of "art" development, the process of waning was prolonged, it was none the less effectual, and Landseer, the pride of the Victorian gentry, has long been forgotten except by the denizens of the middle west of the United States and by those who read his name in the Gallery catalogue.

Landseer committed the unpardonable offence of denaturalizing and degrading—a sin doubly obnoxious because he had sufficient skill and a fondness for animals to paint them in their own image, albeit his skill and perception were very superficial.

The gloss on the skin, not the construction underneath, interested him, and when, in his sentimental contraptions, one sees the lower animals—usually dogs—playing ridiculous parts, one experiences something of the pity and desire to liberate which one feels on seeing Dog Toby perched precariously with a simulated indifference and an air of wounded dignity on the inadequate stage of a Punch and Judy show.

If it were possible to eliminate anything from the priceless National Collection, the first choice would be the works of Landseer—and it is true that the fatal flood of 1928 did its best to obliterate some of his paintings.

VII

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

LIKE so many movements in art, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood originated in a spirit of reaction.

Notwithstanding the examples of Turner and Constable, painting had sunk to a low level in England, and was mainly directed to the illustration, in oil-colour, of trivial or sentimental anecdote.

Three young students of exceptional ability met in the Schools of the Royal Academy in 1846. They were Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt. Like many other students before them and since, they revolted against the prevailing order of things and determined to make a stand against what Millais described as the "slosh" which covered the walls of the Royal Academy, which at that time was the principal exhibition in the country.

In this decision, probably mainly under the impulse of Rossetti, they were strongly influenced and directed by the study of the Campo Santo frescoes with which they had just become acquainted through Lasinio's rather poor engravings. To quote Holman-Hunt, "We found in them, or rather thought we found, that freedom from corruption, pride, and disease for which we sought." The extravagance of the language is expressive of their opinion of the art of the time, which to their young minds combined all three complaints.

The history of the P.R.B. is an oft-told tale. The three friends united to form the Brotherhood in 1848. They were joined by Woolner (sculptor), Collinson (painter), F. G. Stephens (painter and, later, art critic), and W. M. Rossetti (writer).

It was a time of artistic activity in many countries. In France the moment was of particular interest. The Romantic movement was well established; Delacroix had just finished the decorations for the Bibliothèque du Luxembourg. Corot was fifty-two. His influence on the younger school was increasing in extent and power. Courbet had been nine years in Paris. Daumier was nursing his ambitions. The Barbizon



PLATE 8.—BEATA BEATRIX : Rossetti.

School had received a stimulus from Constable. Some German painters, chiefly Cornelius and Overbeck, had conceived a movement somewhat akin to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but rather narrowly religious in inclination and without the humanizing warmth of the English painters.

The French Impressionist movement, with which the P.R.B. has been very inappropriately compared, was still a thing of the future. That movement, when it did arrive, was essentially an artistic one. The German "Nazarenes" might be described as coldly intellectual. The English Pre-Raphaelites were reformers, and to some extent they suffered the fate of reformers. There was something Puritanical or iconoclastic about the Pre-Raphaelite movement. It certainly stemmed the dry rot which was destroying English art, and created an amount of excitement which was out of all proportion to the extent of the movement. But it was not strictly an artistic movement. Though its object, briefly stated, was a return to nature, it was rather a return to natural detail than to expression of natural effects of light and atmosphere, that was a later discovery of the French Impressionists.

The movement was essentially towards illustration and to a vast improvement in the subject-matter of pictures. And apart from their subjects, their pictures had little *new* interest either of thought or expression, except that they attempted to portray real people instead of classical types, and to give them individual characters.

But preconceived ideas are actually an impediment to artistic expression; they impose limitations to the mind which should be open to receive direct impressions of nature. Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) recognized this when he refused to join the Brotherhood, although he was in sympathy with its tenets and was actually influenced by Rossetti, just as Degas later on declined formally to join the French Impressionists. With the exception of some of Rossetti's work, and perhaps a few early Millais's, their painting, with its evidence of remarkably accurate observation, was rather the raw material of art than art itself.

A dispassionate examination of their pictures, especially if one could eliminate the interest of the story, would reveal them as indifferent artists. It would also reveal both the weakness and the strength of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

They were obstructed in their expression by what might be called their propaganda. They were determined to reform painting, and they had decided in advance what form their expression ought to take. But art is not produced from such a state of mind, but from the subconscious-

ness which should be free to receive any impression. Will plays no part in the matter. High moral purpose and determination are not enough to produce a work of art.

They suffered from that *conscience* which is a quality of the English people, and which tends to limit artistic expression by its insistence on a literal likeness to things rather than on a free emotional expression. In the Brotherhood this conscience was inordinately developed. Delacroix was struck by it. He had seen Millais's picture of "The Order of Release" (No. 1,657) at the Paris Exhibition in 1855, where he himself was showing some thirty-five pictures. "J'ai été frappé de cette prodigieuse *conscience* que ce peuple peut apporter même dans les choses d'imagination . . ." Of Millais's picture he wrote in his journal: "Comparez . . . l'ordre d'élargissement avec nos primitifs, nos byzantins, entêtés de style, qui, les yeux fixés sur les images d'un autre temps, n'en prirent que la raideur, sans y ajouter de qualités propres."

To Delacroix it was new. Compared with the "grand manner" of official French art, with its historical and classical personages, it had a fresh reality. Its figures represented definite individuals. He found in it "un sentiment de vérité réel et tout à fait local." To-day the picture seems like a cold statement of facts, carefully drawn, naturally composed, accurately observed, but without emotion, and almost as objective as a photograph.

If Rossetti was the most influential of the group, he was by no means the best equipped technically. He was poet turned painter. The mediæval subjects and atmosphere which he loved could be expressed better in poetry than in paint. They belong naturally to the realm of literature. That is true of all his pictures with a few notable exceptions. Although fine and personal in colour, they have no technical excellence to distinguish them.

In the series of water-colours which came from the George Rae Collection—"The Wedding of St. George" (No. 3,058), "The Blue Closet" (No. 3,057), "The Tune of Seven Towers" (No. 3,059), etc.—he succeeded in creating a mediæval atmosphere, and he showed imagination and fertility of design, but as water-colours they are definitely bad in style. The emotion which the subject may have aroused in him is not expressed in the paintings as, one can easily imagine, it would have been if he had treated the subjects in poetry. They are curiosities of the period. In them Rossetti appears to have suffered from conscience in his determination to get every scrap of *literary* interest out of the subject.

To do so he strained the medium beyond endurance. That he could have achieved adequate and even beautiful expression without destroying the essential quality of the medium is proved by the water-colour of "The Passover in the Holy Family" (No. 3,156), which Ruskin had commissioned in 1885 and which he took away unfinished knowing that Rossetti would spoil it. It has transparence and freshness, and nothing of the exhausted woolliness of the other water-colours.

In his early oils, despite a certain clumsiness in the handling of his material, he occasionally achieved genuine emotional expression. The "Ecce Ancilla Domini" (Annunciation), which has been transferred to the National Gallery, was begun in 1849 when the painter was twenty-one. It has a beautiful simplicity, and the quality of originality which comes from a personal and deeply felt conception. He never reached the artistic level of that picture in any of his later oil-paintings. The first careless rapture was never recaptured. It was buried in an exotic richness and over elaboration. Except, perhaps, in the "Beata Beatrix" (No. 1,279), begun in 1863. The simplicity was gone, but the dearness of the theme to the poet's heart carried the picture through. It achieved a reality of expression notwithstanding the fact that its subject is one that belongs to literature and cannot be fully realized by means of plastic art. It has, however, some means of appealing to the imagination of the spectator, and, with his participation, the expression is completed. It seems to be the very "stuff that dreams are made on."

Rossetti had a curious vein of vulgarity in his nature. That finds expression in the two pictures, "The Beloved" (No. 3,053) and "Monna Vanna" (No. 3,054), begun respectively in 1865 and 1866, and both retouched in 1873. The thought is opulent but none the less vulgar. They are richer than, but quite as commonplace as, Sir Frank Dicksee's paintings.

Rossetti's confrère and junior by one year, Sir J. E. Millais, was remarkably gifted technically. He won the silver medal of the Society of Arts at the age of nine, and exhibited "Pizarro seizing the Inca of Peru" (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) at the age of seventeen. It was a feat, but it has no value artistically. Millais's was a case of extraordinary talents united with a prosaic mind—a mind lacking in poetry. He was a born illustrator; he could conceive a scene—the ingredients of a subject—and put it on canvas with assurance and facility.

His best pictures were painted in the early part of his life under the influence of Rossetti. "Christ in the House of His Parents" (No.

3,584), painted in 1849-50, and "Ophelia" (No. 1,506) in 1852, have a certain quality to which he never again attained. The former picture, more generally known by the title of "The Carpenter's Shop," given it in contempt by the opponents of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, awakened a storm of vituperation which it is now very difficult to understand.

Dickens called it "mean, odious, revolting, and repulsive" (what a revelation of the mind of Charles Dickens !); the verdict of *The Times* was "to speak plainly, revolting." It cost some 10,000 guineas in 1921.

The meticulous methods of the Pre-Raphaelites are seen here at their best, and with all their weaknesses; considering the minuteness of the treatment and, indeed, of the conception, the picture holds together remarkably well. It is not, as a whole, a convincing emotional expression, but remarkable feeling is displayed in individual figures.

Millais's conscience was very much on the alert, and he regarded literal truth as of paramount importance. He purchased two sheep's heads from the butcher and painted the whole flock from them—that, to get absolute truth—instead of finding a flock of sheep and painting his impression of them. That is a criticism of the Pre-Raphaelite mind; truth for them lay in accuracy and abundance of natural detail. The figure of the Carpenter was painted in a carpenter's shop, that being the "only way to get the development of the muscles right"—which, however appropriate to a work of anatomy, reveals a curious conception of the purpose of art.

Nevertheless the picture has passages of great beauty, and shows a remarkable degree of skill. The youthful figures of Christ and St. John are really beautiful, and there is pathos in the figure of Mary, despite the painter's scrupulous care for wrinkled realism.

"Ophelia," painted two years later, is a much better picture, and possibly the completest work of art Millais produced. The extraordinary amount of detail in it is not only exquisitely painted, but is kept strictly in place in a very consistent whole. It is one of the best examples of that deliberate art of picture making which forms the greater part of painting as practised in England. The face of Ophelia was painted from Miss Siddall, afterwards the wife of Rossetti.

The heights Millais attained in these pictures and in certain early works, such as "Lorenzo and Isabella," "Ferdinand lured by Ariel," were not long sustained.

"The Order of Release" (No. 1,657) was produced in 1853, about two years after "Ophelia." It had pleased Delacroix in 1855 at the



PLATE 9.—THE BOYHOOD OF RALEIGH: Millais.

Paris Exhibition, where indeed it must have struck a new note. But it is distinctly inferior, as a work of art, to "Ophelia." Well drawn, carefully observed, naturally composed, it is, like all Millais's later work, essentially prosaic. It is a cold statement of fact. The colours are bright and clear, but descriptive and not expressive. Millais was a natural painter of stories. In the earlier days, with youthful enthusiasm stimulated by Rossetti, he could transmute his material into poetry or art, but after 1853 his work was either descriptive or anecdotal. Through "The Vale of Rest" (No. 1,507), "The Knight Errant" (No. 1,508), "Mercy" (No. 1,510), "A Disciple" (No. 1,564), he sank to his lowest level in "Speak! Speak!" (No. 1,584), the Chantrey purchase of 1895. He was usually a good story-teller, and some of his stories, such as "The North-West Passage" (No. 1,509) and "The Boyhood of Raleigh" (No. 1,691), stand out as being specially successful. But the interest is merely the interest of the story. "The Boyhood of Raleigh," for example, attractive as narrative, is almost absurd in the commonness of its conception. As a work of art it does not exist. Its observation is merely literal. Its values are those of the studio and not of the open air. As an expression of natural and atmosphere effect it is fundamentally false, but it is a good example of English academic art. "The North-West Passage" is better, as it is a scene arranged in a studio (as it might be on the stage of a theatre) and frankly copied. The only thing which was not actually there—the view of the sea through the window—is quite false.

It is the fate of Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) to be numbered among the Pre-Raphaelites. His best work was "Christ washing Peter's Feet" (No. 1,394), which has been transferred to Trafalgar Square. This work is an emotional expression, it has glorious colour, a largeness of design, and a unity which was absent from his later work. The influence of the Pre-Raphaelites ruined him as an artist. Take, for example, the unfinished painting of "Take your Son, Sir!" (No. 4,429). Could anything be dryer or more literal? It is interesting as an accurate piece of observation and for its careful drawing. But it is as objective and without feeling as an illustration to a scientific treatise. "Lear and Cordelia" (No. 3,065) is better, and yet it signally fails to impress. The general impression is smothered by the unrestrained interest in the parts. It is the spirit of illustration which makes the things in the picture of greater interest than the feeling—that is, than the whole emotional conception. Yet this picture shows some æsthetic sense. The lighting feels true;

the colour has some reality ; the varying expressions on the faces are excellent—particularly good is the face of the jester. There is a sense of conflict in the picture—the conflict between the artist and the illustrator.

Madox Brown was a genuine artist, but the influences round him were too strong for him.

The faults of the “ Lear ” are intensified in the picture of “ Chaucer at the Court of Edward III.” (No. 2,063). That picture has numerous passages in which character is wonderfully expressed, and which have beauty of colour, observation, and technique, but in the result it is a mere conglomeration of personages.

“ The Writing Lesson ” (No. 3,228) and “ The Last of England ” (No. 3,064) are both better, particularly the latter. It has considerable interest—character, humour, and pathos—but little artistic merit.

Madox Brown had more sense of style in painting than any of the members of the Brotherhood except, perhaps, Arthur Hughes. Unlike Millais and Rossetti, he was never guilty of vulgarity in his work.

William Holman-Hunt (1827-1910) was the staunchest of all the Pre-Raphaelites. He had the Nonconformist conscience to a high degree. It never failed him. “ Claudio and Isabella ” (No. 3,447) is the nearest approach to a complete work of art of any of his pictures in the National Collection. But it has a certain artistic dullness. It is a poor conception of colour, and there is no mystery in the value of those figures seen against the light. Imagine the different result if Degas had painted the subject ! But Degas is too high a standard for the Pre-Raphaelites. If Sickert had painted it we should have had a picture in which the interest would be primarily artistic. There would be some magic of mystery and suggestion in the values and in the lighting. And as much character—but character which was subtle and real, and which gradually emerged as in life—not a mere if adequate description in which everything in the dry statement is seen once and for ever. It would be scarcely fair to judge Holman-Hunt by “ The Ship ” (No. 2,120), for that work is poor as a painting and remarkably weak as observation. The large picture of “ The Triumph of the Innocents ” (No. 3,334) is very disagreeable in quality. It shows great power, but a complete absence of taste and poetry. Taken piecemeal it has certain characteristics which are admirable. Each figure is studied minutely but without relationship to the whole. And each is a complete and literal description. The observations of the “ conscience,” to which Delacroix referred, are seen here with the extreme of tiresomeness. In justice to Holman-Hunt it should

A. D. 1852



THE LAST OF ENGLAND.

THE LAST OF ENGLAND: F. M. Brown.

be said that his best work is not seen in the National Collection. There is nothing in it so fresh or so vital as his "Hireling Shepherd" of 1851.

There are certain other followers of the Pre-Raphaelites who, though holding a lesser place historically, are, as artists, entitled to a higher niche than some of the leaders of the movement.

Arthur Hughes (1832-1915) and W. L. Windus (1823-1907), for example, had genuine artistic feeling, and had they lived at a later period when literature had ceased to be the main inspiration of painting, they might have produced more interesting works of art—works with a direct relation to real life and not merely a relationship through literature. Arthur Hughes would probably have been a good Impressionist painter if he had lived at the right time and in the right place, for he had a fine sense of colour and used it to express his vision of nature. He was much less of an illustrator than any of the other Pre-Raphaelites. His best picture, "April Love" (No. 2,476), has a beauty of its own; its interest does not lie mainly (or at all) in its story. His colour was not only strong and pure, but the colour tones within the picture are related to one another. "April Love" is a simple composition, but it has a dynamic centre which holds it together, and which is conspicuously absent from most of the paintings of the school. He has all the detail of the P.R.B., but it is kept strictly subordinate to the whole design. The exquisite colour of the little picture of "Fair Rosamond," lent to the Gallery, is an expression of pure joy. Later in life his subject pictures became sentimental and vague, but his landscape painting never lost its crispness or its pure fine colour.

Although they were not friends, Windus seems to be the artistic companion, though not the complement of Hughes. In his case also the painter was stronger than the illustrator. His interesting picture, "Too Late" (No. 3,597), is spoilt by its truly Victorian story. It is painted with ugly and uncompromising realism, and with a conscientiousness worthy of Holman-Hunt, but the landscape background is remarkable for its naturalistic feeling, its atmosphere, light and colour.

The other followers of the original Brotherhood, although differing in personal expression, added nothing essential and nothing new. James Collinson (1825?-81) reduced the whole thing to an absurdity. Instead of description his pictures became mere catalogues. "The Empty Purse" (No. 3,201) is a cold, poorly painted collection of objects grouped round a young woman. The painter has no feeling about the matter—he merely tells us that the things were there.



APRIL LOVE : Hughes.

R. B. Martineau (1826-69), who is not ranked very highly as a painter, shows a mastery of handling a multitude of detail that Collinson and some other painters of the school lacked. He was a pupil of Holman-Hunt and worked in his studio, but he had more taste and less distinction than his master. His "Last Day in the Old Home" (No. 1,500) is no doubt a document, and an interesting one, but it is also a picture in which the multifarious detail is kept in some relationship to the whole design. Though somewhat dry in treatment and harsh in colour, the general effect is good. And there is some emotional expression, although it derives from the story and not from the beauty of natural effect, as colour, tone, and atmosphere. Its story as such is admirably told; good in human expression and character, it is, as it were, richly biographical.

Lesser followers like Deverell and Spencer Stanhope had little talent and less taste, but J. F. Lewis (1805-76), who either anticipated the Pre-Raphaelites or was influenced by them, was a brilliant painter with a refined and delicate touch. Curiously enough he was at first employed by George IV. to paint sporting subjects at Windsor. Although "Edfou" (No. 1,405) and "The Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's House" (No. 1,688) are extremely skilful and attractive, they are too minute to show his powers to advantage. Those are better seen in "The Siesta" (No. 3,594) at Trafalgar Square, in which the southern sunlight is beautifully expressed with a wealth of brilliant detail admirably controlled. Henry Wallis (1830-1916), another highly skilful painter, came under the same influence. His "Death of Chatterton" (No. 1,685) shows his gift of imitating textures and things with a truly remarkable realism.

The influence of the Pre-Raphaelites was not very extensive. The Scottish painter, W. Fettes Douglas (1822-91), is sometimes numbered with them, but there was no essential resemblance unless it lay in his love of bric-à-brac. His pictures are conceived in quite a different spirit, and his methods were broader and more robust, as may be seen in "Bibliomania" (No. 617) with its vigorously handled detail.

Another Scotsman, James Archer (1823-1904), certainly fell under their literary spell, but he was a hard and dull painter, achieving in his "Morte d'Arthur" (No. 2,969) a strangely cold and unattractive quality. A rather later and better painter shared their tenets and adopted their methods to distinct advantage. Arthur Boyd Houghton (1836-75) was frankly an illustrator, and produced some of the best works during the great period of English illustration, the 'sixties. But he used oil-paint



THE LAST DAY IN THE OLD HOME: Martineau.

with a certain attractive and natural style. And he went directly to life for his subjects, which, although they were seen with an illustrator's mind, revealed an eye for natural effect and for outdoor feeling. He had a pleasant sense of humour and a love of children, whom he drew and painted with understanding. His "Volunteers" (No. 4,207) shows his gifts to perfection. It is full of delightful incident, and is painted with a fluid and easy breadth which is not the least of his attractions.

The Brotherhood, formed with so much defiance and enthusiasm and so absurdly attacked, had its day. It was successful in defeating the "slosh" which filled the Academy previously to its formation, and it turned men's thoughts to higher things, even if those things were still literary. But its influence ended almost within its own time. It contained no seeds capable of future development, as the movement was essentially literary rather than artistic. But the sincerity and integrity

of its practitioners was unquestioned, and must be counted to them for righteousness.

It made art history, and if the good was interred with their bones, it left no evil to live after it, for the literary conception has been to a great extent the material of English art both before and since, and the Pre-Raphaelites cannot be blamed for it.



PLATE 10.—DEATH OF CHATTERTON : Wallis.

VIII

ALFRED STEVENS

ALFRED STEVENS (1817-75) was something of a phenomenon in English art. His training was quite unlike that of most English artists, and much nearer to that of a pupil of one of the old Italian masters. His life was a strange mixture of good and ill fortune ; a record of hard work and thwarted opportunities, and a constant struggle for the means of expression. He worked at many branches of art, receiving recognition in none, until at the end of his life his greatest work brought him a reluctant but increasing fame. Worn out by worries induced by the stupidity of officials, he seized his great opportunity, so long sought, only to meet his death before it was completed, at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight.

He was born at Blandford, in Dorsetshire, on December 30, 1817. At the age of ten he helped in the workshop of his father, George Stevens, who was a sign and heraldic painter.

He was fortunate enough to attract the notice of the Hon. and Rev. Samuel Best, rector of Blandford St. Mary, through whose assistance he was sent to Italy to study instead of being made an apprentice to Sir Edwin Landseer, which project had been under consideration. Never in a young artist's life can there have been a more remarkable alternative : Italy or Landseer ? the sublime or the ridiculous ? Landseer would have cost £500. Sixty pounds took the youthful Stevens to Italy.

That the young artist should have attracted attention is not remarkable. There is evidence of his unusual ability in the little portrait of himself at the age of fourteen (No. 3,805) and the "Portrait of Samuel Pegler" (No. 4,220), said to have been painted at the same time, although it must have been a year or two later.

In October 1833, at the age of sixteen, Stevens landed at Naples to begin his remarkable "Wanderjahre," which ended in 1842 with his return to England, "the most thoroughly educated artist the country has seen," as I think Mr. D. S. MacColl has described him.

Usually there is danger to an artist in over education. It has often

led to imitation of the manner of another. It is absolutely essential that an artist should study and experience nature at first hand and not through the eyes of any other painter. But Alfred Stevens was not purely an artist—a sculptor and painter—he was also a designer and decorator. His mind was scientific as well as artistic—perhaps mainly scientific. In Italy he acquired vast knowledge and material—for never can a young student have wasted less time—and while it was to be, in the future, of inestimable value for his decorations, it did not spoil the directness of his painting. Although it is true he learnt more from other artists' work than from nature, he had too much personal feeling to be an imitator, and although one is invariably conscious of the influence of Michelangelo on his work and his admiration for that great master, Stevens's slightest drawing has the genuine quality of personal impulse and not the remoteness of imitation.

Landed at Naples, he lost no time in studying the works of art and antiquities there. He also sketched and copied at Pompeii and in Capri. Then he set out on foot for Rome. The "Eternal City" was at that time too disturbed for his peace of mind, and he shortly took the road for Siena, San Gimignano, and Florence. In the last-named city he settled for some three years, supporting himself by working for the dealers. There he learnt the art of fresco and measured the fronts of palaces, thus acquiring a fund of detail and a perfect sense of classical proportion.

In 1839 he was in Milan studying ornament under Albertolli; thence he proceeded to Venice, where he copied Titian, Tintoretto, and other masters, the influence of which is reflected in his "Portrait of John Morris Moore" (No. 2,132), which was begun in Florence and renewed in Rome in 1840, where they shared a studio, and in his "Portrait of an Artist" (No. 2,212).

Back in Rome in 1840, he copied pictures, but was obliged to accept a post as clerk of works in order to make a living. His efficiency brought him into conflict with the workmen, who threatened his life. Shortly afterwards (1841-42) he became an assistant to Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, whom he afterwards declared was his only master.

Stevens returned to England in 1842, marking time and doing odd jobs at Blandford for two years. The prospects of obtaining work then attracted him to London. Life was difficult for a young and unknown artist, but the following year he was appointed Master of Architectural Drawing, Perspective, etc., at the School of Design at Somerset House—"Master of Everything," as he described it. The salary was £150, and

although it enabled him to live, the work must have been particularly irksome to an artist with so inventive and so well-stored a mind as his. In 1847, on a reconstruction of the staff, he resigned, not before he was "heartily sick of it." That year he received through his friend Collmann the opportunity for some interior decoration. This was for Deysbrook, a mansion near Liverpool in the possession of the Blundell family.

Stevens decorated the dining- and the drawing-rooms. The dining-room had a ceiling with deeply moulded panels ; he filled each panel with a figure representing a domestic virtue : Friendship, Generosity, Cheerfulness, Contentment. In the drawing-rooms the ceilings were flat, and these he decorated in the Pompeian style ; the walls were yellow with bays ; in each bay he painted a reclining figure. He worked rapidly, spending less than one day over each panel. The subjects were sketched in red chalk and thinly painted with Pariss's medium.

He was constantly at work designing and inventing. In 1849 Professor Cockerell employed him at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, for which building he modelled figures and drew the fine design for the pediment. During that year he produced the magnificent designs for the doors of the Geological Museum in Jermyn Street, London. That project, unfortunately, was not carried out. Later, in 1854, he designed a band of figures for the pavement, his only work in the interior of the Liverpool Hall.

In 1850 he became designer for Messrs. Hoole, iron and bronze founders of Sheffield, and he secured for them the first place at the 1851 Exhibition. His work there could not, however, satisfy him for long, and in 1852 he was back in London, where he designed, among many other things, the lions for the British Museum railings.

On September 13, 1856, appeared an advertisement of the competition for the Wellington Monument for St. Paul's Cathedral. The monument was to occupy a site thirteen feet wide by a foot deep, and was to cost £20,000. The jury consisted of the Dean of St. Paul's, Professor Cockerell, and four other laymen. The design for the competition cost Stevens eight months' hard work. In the result, Stevens was placed sixth on the award. The jury in their report made the remarkable announcement in making their judgment, that they had not taken into consideration the fitness of the design for the particular site in St. Paul's. It should be said that Professor Cockerell did not sign the report. Could anything have been more fatuous ? It was one of the most notable instances of the futility of official interference with art, and one fraught

with the most tiresome consequences to Stevens. The design chosen proved to be quite unsuitable. And eventually, after a process of exhaustion—the only process suitable to the official mind—it was found that, in fact, Stevens's design was the only one which would do! To compensate the disappointed but useless prize-winners, the sum of £6,000 was deducted from the original figure of £20,000. Stevens, being no business man and anxious to realize his dreams, agreed to the reduction. It was a case of adding injury to insult. His design consisted of the Triumphal Arch of the Conqueror with twelve columns, the Mortuary Pile of the Conqueror, an Effigy, Sarcophagus, and Trophy of Arms. The groups of "Valour and Cowardice" (No. 2,269) and "Truth and Falsehood" (No. 2,270) ornamented the sides. The figure of the Duke on horseback was to crown the whole. This latter was ruled out by the caprice of the Dean and was added later. The story of Stevens's work and struggles, delays and differences with the authorities, is fairly well known. It wore him out, and he died, with the monument unfinished.

Two years after he entered for the Wellington competition he was working on a scheme for the decoration of the dome of the British Museum Reading Room. There were twenty bays; for each bay Stevens designed a figure to represent one branch of man's achievement. If the work had been carried out it would have been one of the richest of the few grandly decorated buildings of England. Unfortunately, this was one of many frustrated schemes.

During that year, 1858, Mr. Robert S. Holford commissioned Stevens to decorate his dwelling, Dorchester House, in Park Lane. For the dining-room he planned to ornament the ceiling and cove with historical compositions, the subjects being taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Chronicles* of the early rulers of Britain. The panels at the ends of the ceiling were to represent the "Judgment of Paris" and the "Flight of Æneas." The cove was to tell the story of the early British heroes. Stevens also designed the mantelpiece for the saloon and various fittings; a sideboard, doors, etc. He worked for twelve months on studies for the decorations, but being pressed about the Wellington Monument, he abandoned the work on Dorchester House, never to resume it.

Incidentally, in 1862, he prepared designs for the decoration of the dome of St. Paul's, and contemplated the production of four mosaics for the spandrels under the dome. The noble cartoon for one of these, "Isaiah" (No. 1,846), is in this collection. If it shows Stevens's indebted-



MOTHER AND CHILD : Stevens.

ness to Michelangelo, it also illustrates the greatness of his conception and his peculiar gift for harmonious decoration.

Studies for most of his decorative schemes are preserved in the Tate Gallery, particularly of his designs for Dorchester House (through the Chantrey Bequest purchase of 1923). But it must be remembered that Stevens did not make drawings in the modern way in which the drawings should be an end in themselves. All his drawings had a further purpose : they were studies for his decorations. They will not compare for completeness, for style, and for vitality with those of Degas (which were also mostly done as studies for some larger work), although they may bear comparison with those of Michelangelo.

That Stevens might have devoted himself, successfully and exclusively,

to portrait painting is proved by the examples in the Gallery. His finest portrait, that of Mrs. Mary Anne Collman (No. 1,775), was transferred to Trafalgar Square. It is one of the most exquisite paintings in English art, but besides being an excellent portrait it is imbued, one feels, with the sensitive and sympathetic nature of the artist himself. It was painted about 1854. Before that he had worked on the rather pathetic "Mother and Child" (No. 3,467). This, which was painted about 1849, represents the wife of his Sheffield friend, Mr. Young Mitchell. It was left unfinished owing to the death of the mother. Like all his portraits, it reveals certain things: chiefly that Stevens was not inspired by life, that he did not express reality. He was essentially academic, and derived and expressed his conceptions from and through certain old masters. He had rhythm, and a sense of style and classical design, but merely as a representation of life the portrait has little merit. It is harmonious, but quite negative in colour. It has nothing of that sense of truth, that sting of reality, which one finds in the work of Velazquez, Rembrandt, or Degas. But Stevens must be judged from another point of view. He is the typical example of academic art at its truest and best.

IX

WHISTLER AND HIS INFLUENCE

WHISTLER was the strangest star that ever swam into the firmament of British art. His passage was meteoric, and to the watcher of the artistic skies he must have seemed a phenomenon of extraordinary interest. Whistler's ideas and art were peculiarly foreign to the English temperament, and, prompted by their dislike of the unfamiliar, English critics and artists united in metaphorically stoning him as a charlatan and a freak. There were a few distinguished exceptions who could appreciate the beauty of his work—a beauty that should have been more apparent at the moment of his appearance than it is now, for it was strikingly new then, whereas we have passed on to other and deeper things.

Whistler's influence was limited, but it had its effect on certain sensitive spirits like Conder, Sickert, and Potter, and a more general, though less traceable effect, on the etchers who came after him. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any definite sign of his influence in the work of the painters of to-day with the possible exception of the delicate art of Henry Bishop, and perhaps occasionally in that of William Nicholson.

Among other things, Whistler's work proves that exquisite taste, however essential it may be to a work of craftsmanship, is not sufficient in itself to give life to a work of art. Whistler had perfect taste, and it led him to impose definite limitations on his art, until by a process of subtraction his art became artificial and unreal.

Yet his earlier work had proved that he had a passion for life, and could rejoice in its manifestations. That was before certain artistic experiences led him to devote himself to the distillation of that fine thin essence which to-day appears to us as beautiful—as an *objet d'art* may be beautiful—but as something remote and cold in which we can take no part.

Whistler had a natural style, but he carefully cultivated another and an artificial one. Those early works of his, painted under the influence

of Courbet, like "At the Piano" (1860), the "Blue Wave, Biarritz," of 1861, and "La Mère Gerard," which, curiously enough, was exhibited at the Academy in the same year, had a natural force and fire, and were warm with the expression of life. But his gifts, being definitely marked in certain directions, led, consciously or unconsciously, to a careful and exclusive exploitation of those aspects of nature and art in which his gifts could find fullest expression. This was confirmed by the new interest in Japanese art which infected the French Impressionists with a passing but beneficial effect, although it induced Monet to paint at least one extraordinarily bad picture. With Whistler the influence became an obsession, and after 1864 it gradually dominated all his work.

To the Japanese the method and the point of view were inherent and traditional; in the case of the European artist they would have been imposed from the outside, and even submitting to their general influence confirmed the artificial tendency of Whistler's nature.

We have seen the ill-effects of the adoption of an alien way of thought in the reverse case of the Japanese artist who has studied in Paris and adopted European methods with the most commonplace results.

It is not to be supposed that Whistler imitated the actual technique of the Japanese, but his great admiration for their severe and crystalline art led to a preoccupation with style rather than with the natural method of emotional expression which is inherent in the quality of the intuition. There is no doubt that much of his later work—all the "Nocturnes" and many of the portraits—was run into a mould which restricted rather than amplified its expression. The qualities of life—recognition of which in a work of art always stimulates the spectator—were gradually excluded in favour of a flat pattern enhanced with beauty of colour and tone and exquisite handling. But the qualities he acquired and those he developed were invaluable to him in etching, which is to such a large extent an exercise of craftsmanship and of which he was one of the greatest masters.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) was born at Lowell, in Massachusetts. As a child he was taken to St. Petersburg, but at the age of fifteen he returned to America, where he entered the West Point Military Academy. Three years later he was attached as draughtsman to the Coast and Geodetic Survey at Washington. In that employment he learnt the technique of etching on copper, so that it was natural, after he had finally taken up art, that his first work should be in that medium. He was twenty-one when he decided to devote himself to the profession

in which he became so distinguished. At Gleyre's Studio in Paris, which he entered soon after, he met Degas, Bracquemond, Legros, Fantin-Latour, and Du Maurier, with the last of whom he afterwards shared a studio in Newman Street, London.

His first important work was done through the medium of etching. "The Little French Set," executed in Paris, was published in 1858. After that he was busy with the Thames series of sixteen etchings while he was living with his brother-in-law, F. Seymour Hayden (also a well-known etcher), who declared on a later occasion, that if he had to choose between parting with his Rembrandt or his Whistler etchings, he would give up the Rembrandts.

His first important oil-painting was "At the Piano" (R.A., 1860). This was purchased by John Philip, the painter. Like the "Blue Wave, Biarritz," it shows the influence of Courbet, whose work with that of Corot was the dominating influence on students in Paris at that time. The Japanese influence came to Paris mainly through Japanese prints. It was enhanced in Whistler's case by his fondness for Japanese china. It began to show itself in his pictures, "Die Lange Leizen" (1864), "Old Battersea Bridge" and "The Little White Girl" of 1865.

The well-known butterfly signature which is on all his later paintings had not yet appeared. It gradually developed after the painting of his famous picture, "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine" of 1863-64. After that date he arranged his initials in the Japanese fashion, and they first appeared interlaced in an oblong or circular frame. With the "Nocturnes" of 1872 and the large portraits the butterfly appeared.

His craving for style in the Japanese manner may be seen in the "Portrait of his Mother" (R.A., 1872), which is now in the Luxembourg Museum, and which must be known throughout the world, at least through reproduction. One feels immediately that the picture is a careful arrangement, perfectly poised as a design, and with passages of really beautiful painting. But it is unreal and remote from life. There is no warmth, no excitement in it. The truth is that Whistler's work was as academic as that of any Royal Academician, but he had infinitely better taste and a much more artistic convention. He, too, started from the wrong end. Instead of receiving an emotional impression from nature which was so strong as to demand expression, and realizing it in the manner best fitted for its expression, he had a definite technique and a perfectly clear idea of what he wanted his picture to look like, and nature—that is, his subject—had to fit into it. Therefore there is very little that is fundamental

or vital in any of his pictures. They are often perfect in design, lovely in colour and in tone, and exquisitely handled.

The picture of "Old Battersea Bridge" (No. 1,959) is a perfect example of his work under Japanese influence. It is exquisite in colour, quality, and composition, but it remains an arrangement—a beautiful arrangement—but only an arrangement. This picture was one of those produced in Court during the famous libel case of 1878. One could hardly have chosen any picture more puzzling to an English judge and jury.

Whistler undoubtedly experienced the need, which every real artist feels, of a more spiritualized expression than merely realistic painting. But there is no short cut to such a consummation. It is a matter of slow evolution, and how few artists ever attain it. McEvoy, feeling the need, employed what was practically a trick; Whistler invented a convention almost a formula. Both painters were fine artists, but they severed connection with nature and became superficial.

Charles Conder (1868–1909) was akin to Whistler in feeling, although he was a painter of a much smaller calibre. He may have felt, too, the need of a more spiritual expression—the extraction of a poetical essence from life—than the mere description of things could give. But he had not the artistic experience, nor, as an oil-painter, had he the technique to realize his dreams out of the stuff of nature. So we get too often in his practice of oil-painting weak visions washily expressed, although redeemed always by charming colour and delicate feeling. In his water-colours it was different. In the use of that elusive medium there is needed a lightness of touch, a neat knack if not a trick, and above all a power of suggestion.

Those things were in harmony with Conder's temperament; those he could supply where the deep knowledge, the power of building up and realizing necessary in an oil-painting failed him, and revealed mainly his shortcomings.

Water-colour—or the more attractive word *aquarelle*—was the method, *par excellence*, for the expression of his delicate visions which found in the fan shape an added felicity—a felicity which seemed to vanish when he was confronted with a severe and arbitrary rectangular canvas.

There is a very definite difference between Conder's work in oil and water-colour. He was at his best under conditions which gave his phantasy free play. He was troubled by oil-painting, because his genius did not lie in the direction of realization but in that of suggestion. And

his work in that medium was not only inferior in handling, but the absence of congeniality restricted his sense of design and crippled his phantasy. There is no really fine oil-painting by Conder, and there is at least one definitely bad one. Yet all his work shows taste, charming colour, and a certain originality in its point of view.

But with water-colour as his medium, the whole thing was different. With that fluid method in which a blob of colour could suggest so much, his imagination no longer stumbled but could express itself with a spontaneous ease which Whistler might have envied, and with exquisite delicacy and an infinite variety. The "Windy Day at Brighton" (No. 3,645), in which the characteristic figure of Mr. Walter Sickert is introduced, is one of his best, because it is one of his freest, essays in oil-paint. It also shows something of that romantic vision which was his most valuable gift. But in the little pictures of Swanage (Nos. 4,407, 4,411, and 4,412), charming as they are in colour, we feel that he has had a tussle with his material, and that the result is a compromise.

One may also be conscious of the unsuitability of his means in the painting of "The Green Apple" (No. 3,837), which should be romantic and phantastic but is actually clumsy and rather silly: lovely in colour, but emotion is unawakened; and "The Plum Tree" (No. 3,423), which has a kind of nebulous beauty, is too vague and unreal. It shows the direct influence of Whistler, and emphasizes the danger of imitating the methods of another artist when they are so personal and so exotic as Whistler's were. But when one turns to Conder's designs for fans—"Romantic Adventure" (No. 3,194) and "The New Moon" (No. 4,243)—one sees his art at its best, and at that it was unrivalled. The material—the silk—seemed specially sympathetic to him, and the fan-shape, where it would have hampered another, seemed to liberate his fancy. For the water-colour painting of "Gossip" (No. 3,195), although it is executed on silk, is a remarkably feeble and commonplace work.

Another painter, who had some sort of relationship with Conder, was Joseph Crawhall (1861-1913). He was a precocious child, and throughout his life was a severe critic of his work, which led him to destroy many drawings and paintings which displeased him. He was susceptible to Oriental influence—Chinese or Japanese—particularly in his paintings of birds. Much of his best work was done on fine linen or silk. The water-colour of "The Dove" (No. 3,680), on the former material, is a characteristic example of his refined and delicate art in which everything is reduced to essentials and expressed with the utmost skill and precision.

In his paintings of horses he retained character and a certain air of realism with his refined and crystalline execution. Sir William Burrell has a fine collection of Crawhall's water-colours which were shown at the Gallery in 1924.

At the time of his celebrated action against Ruskin, Whistler expressed his admiration of Albert Moore (1841-93) as an artist, and later dedicated his witty brochure, *Art and Art Critics*, to him.

Moore was not, however, influenced by "the Master" (except by way of confirmation and encouragement), although he was one of the few artists who admired Whistler at that time, in 1878. His art was formed before he met that turbulent spirit.

At first his work was illustrative in tendency and his subjects were chosen from the Bible, but in 1865 he changed his style and produced the first of his decorative compositions, of which "Blossoms" (No. 1,549) is a good example. This particular work was painted in 1881. It has a certain beauty and escapes sickliness. It has a pleasant quality of paint, and avoids the mistake made by Leighton of treating such subjects in a common realistic manner. In fact, the contrast between those two artists emphasizes the necessity of an impeccable taste in the treatment of the kind of subject which both painters chose.

Whistler had a definite effect on certain portrait painters, but before considering their work in that connection one must look at three little pictures of one of the most sensitive artists of the English School.

Frank Huddleston Potter (1845-87) had a difficult life, which was cut short by hardship and poverty at the early age of forty-two. Whether he was directly influenced by Whistler or not, his work has a spiritual kinship with that artist's. It recalls something of the earlier work of Whistler, that of the time of his picture "At the Piano" (1860), but Potter's extraordinarily subtle style is entirely personal.

The "Music Lesson" (No. 2,108) was finished in 1887, the year of his death, and at the moment when his work was beginning to attract the attention so long denied to it. The picture reveals a charming sympathy, a quality so valuable and yet so rare in art, and one which the French painter Degas possessed to perfection. The figures are painted with a sort of loving appreciation, and his technique, which is both minute and broad, was perfectly adapted to the expression of his subtle perception. The picture is unusually low in tone, but the colour is rich and used with much discretion. The same personal qualities distinguish the painting of "Little Dormouse" (No. 2,214).



LITTLE DORMOUSE : Potter.

Whistler's influence on certain of the portrait painters of his time was beneficial if fleeting. The portraits of the period were efforts in commonplace realism ; the likeness had become the chief consideration ; art was neither demanded nor supplied.

Robert Brough, who if he had lived would have been a serious rival to Sargent, experienced it momentarily, and recorded its expression in his attractive if artificial " *Fantaisie en Folie* " (No. 1,956), and in a very subtle portrait of W. D. Ross (then editor of *Black and White*), which was shown in Munich, I think, about 1905. But Whistler's methods and point of view were totally unsuited to the professional portrait painter, and Brough's facility led him inevitably in that direction. But on two other painters the influence was much more enduring.

The charm of Sir John Lavery's earlier work lies in the beauty of its tone. That was his personal gift ; but Whistler's example encouraged and confirmed it, and Lavery's reputation both at home and abroad was largely due to this quality and to his artistic handling of paint. Those qualities are more attractive than fundamental ; they impart charm but not vitality. There is charm in the large painting of " *La Morte du Cygne* " (No. 3,000), in which that provocative artist Anna Pavlova is seen at the finish of one of her most characteristic dances, but in comparison with the actual scene it is terribly negative. Of recent years Lavery has become bright, and with the shedding of his personal distinctive quality his work tends towards the commonplace. Both " *North Berwick* " (No. 3,688) and " *The Jockey's Dressing Room at Ascot* " (No. 3,958) are clever, and that is the most fatal adjective that can be applied to a work of art.

William Nicholson, an artist of great refinement, was also conscious of Whistler's work in his portraits and landscapes.

The attractive little canvas, " *Portrait of W. E. Henley* " (No. 4,087), has that subtlety of tonal effect which Whistler prized, but in his care to preserve style, substance has to some extent eluded the artist, and the portrait is in consequence far too reticent as a representation of its robust and picturesque subject. That is always the penalty of a painter's preoccupation with his means. In the complete surrender to his emotion, the artist should be unconscious of his method. The " *Portrait of Miss Jekyll* " (No. 3,617) and " *Lady in Furs* " (No. 3,689) suffer from the same restraint, particularly the latter, which is so reticent as to lose any sense of reality. In his exquisite paintings of still-life, of which " *Lowe-stoft Bowl* " (No. 3,178) is a good example, the painter is entirely himself

in his fine appreciation of textures and in the facile, finished handling of his material.

A French artist, who settled and painted in London, Théodore Roussel (1847-1926), was a frank admirer and pupil of Whistler, both as painter and etcher. His picture, "The Reading Girl" (No. 4,361), has been highly praised, but actually with all its skill it suffers from artificiality. It suggests what is stupidly described as an "artistic photograph." The model is too obviously posed, and the relations of the figure with the dark, vague background are false. One has only to imagine it painted by a Cézanne or a Van Gogh to realize how little it has the moving and startling quality of life.

Another friend of "the Master's," A. H. Studd (1864-1919), found the natural expression of his gentle and refined spirit under the ægis of Whistler. This is one of those cases of identical feeling rather than one of mere imitation, although Studd's work could, at its best, almost be mistaken for that of his master. His work has a similar quality of tone, colour, and handling, but it was undoubtedly the natural expression of the painter's personality confirmed and encouraged by a more vital mind.

The effect of the super-subtle master on a painter of an unusually naïve character is seen in the work of Walter Greaves. "Hammersmith Bridge on a Boat-race Day" (No. 3,643) is an exceptional picture even in Greaves's work. Though he owed everything to Whistler's example and tuition, Whistler could not have painted this strange picture, which is a medley of incongruities.

It is a picture seemingly without plan and without much logic. A conglomeration of types and incidents painted in a flat convention, it has an unintentionally decorative effect. Without proportion it has a certain rhythm, without realism it is convincing, and with its curious haphazard manner of grouping figures it has a fascination. Possibly its charm lies in the innocent sincerity and in its being a quaint record of things seen. It seems to prove that the vital interest of a work of art depends on its being a sincere expression of an artist's personality.

One of the greatest of Modern English artists was, at one time, intimately associated with Whistler, but Sickert's was the stronger personality, and it is difficult to say to what extent Sickert was influenced. Probably chiefly in his etching, and perhaps in his concern for integrity and beauty of tone and for regarding his subject from one point of view—with one focus—which is a rare thing in English art. While Whistler coquetted with ideas, Sickert turned to real life and expressed the quality of life in

his own inimitable manner. Whistler walked among the shadows and was content with the merest semblance of things, and his work impresses us in these days no more than the shadow on the waters.

Art, for endurance, demands the complete surrender of the artist. He must find his personality by losing himself in the immensity of nature that inspires him, as Van Gogh did. If he is concerned self-consciously with the preservation of his style and his personality, he remains, like Whistler, merely mannered and precious.

X

WATTS AND BURNE-JONES

THERE are two English painters who may be considered together ; not because they resemble one another, but because they are both peculiarly English products. G. F. Watts (1817-1904) spent the greater part of his life in painting sermons on canvas. It is difficult to imagine a painter of any other nation, always excepting America, dedicating a creative gift to an end so futile. Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98), the other painter, with an inexhaustible interest in mythology and legend, produced a great many pictures which revealed his ability as an illustrator and his lack of talent as a painter. It would be difficult to imagine a Frenchman, for example, choosing as a medium of expression an art for which he had so little feeling.

Watts was a remarkable personality ; with great breadth of mind and an alert imagination he combined a certain type of ideology. He sacrificed his real gifts to the expression of ethical ideas. It is a case of an artist being overlaid by the prevalent English morality. Though he was born in London, his family was originally Welsh. His father, a maker of musical instruments, came from Hereford. He gave evidence of his talent at an early age, when he painted small pictures from subjects taken from Scott's novels and poems, and pastoral subjects which even then revealed the attraction the Greek spirit had for him—a spirit which, despite his sympathy, was unable to dominate his predilection for morality. At the age of eighteen he worked for a short time at the Royal Academy Schools before he entered the studio of William Behnes, the sculptor, whose father, a piano maker, was a family friend. He used to watch Behnes at work, and through Behnes he got to know the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, which deeply impressed him, and if he derived something of their generous sense of form and rhythm he missed their essential spirit. Charles Behnes gave him lessons in oil-painting and made him copy Lely.

His earlier work shows a certain decorative sense, but it has a common-

ness of form and a vulgarity of colour which seems to reveal a certain Teutonic influence, which may have been derived from the Behnes family, who came originally from Hanover. He had some success with his decorations. In 1842 his cartoon for the decorations in the Houses of Parliament, "Caractacus led in Triumph through the Streets of Rome," won a prize of £300, which enabled him, in 1843, to pay a visit to Italy, where he stayed with Lord Holland for four years. He travelled by diligence, then by water down the Rhone, and by sea to Leghorn. At Lord Holland's house he painted portraits and decorated the courtyard with frescoes. On his return in 1847, Mr. R. S. Holford offered him a room in Dorchester House as a studio. He entered for the third competition for the Houses of Parliament decoration, and was awarded a prize of £500 for his design of "Alfred inciting his Subjects to prevent the Landing of the Danes": the cartoon for this is in a committee room in the House of Commons. He then offered to decorate the hall at Euston Station with a series of designs entitled "The Progress of the Cosmos"—an offer which was declined. In 1853 he visited Venice, where he saw the works of Titian for the first time. They seemed to him to express in paint the qualities of flesh and drapery which he had admired in the Elgin Marbles. In 1856 he visited Greece and Italy, and on his return he began to paint the series of portraits of noted men which are now in the National Portrait Gallery.

His offer to paint and decorate the hall at Lincoln's Inn was accepted, and in 1860 he began work on his great fresco, "Justice: a Hemicycle of Lawgivers," which took him six years to complete. His big decoration, "A Story from Boccaccio" (No. 1,913), gives some idea of his early work in this direction. A disagreeably florid convention, it is remarkably vulgar as a plastic conception, and the colour is hot, heavy, and disagreeable. Its effect as decoration is nullified by an exaggerated realism, which is at the same time empty and conventional and not really observed—an echo of the taste of the German "Nazarenes." It is interesting and profitable to contrast it with the large painting by Augustus John, "Galway" (No. 3,210), which hangs opposite it. This painting is conceived in the true spirit of decoration, with just the right tone and grey quality of colour to keep it within the same plane as the wall on which it is hanging. The "Story from Boccaccio" was painted at Florence between 1843 and 1847, before Watts had seen the paintings of Titian, which had such an effect on the style of his painting and on his mental conceptions. "Echo" (No. 1,983) was produced in Florence at the same

time, but it has a refinement which the larger painting completely lacks. Watts's style began to change after his visit to Venice in 1853, and curiously enough the sensuousness and splendour of the Venetians seems to have provoked in him the desire to paint those moral lessons which, in spite of certain artistic qualities, are so tedious and so futile.

There are a few other pictures which may be considered mainly as decorations. It is difficult to say whether the large picture of the "Dray Horses" (No. 1,633), painted in 1864, is decorative or realistic. It is a compromise between the two: as realism it shows poor observation, while it is too real to be decorative. It is an achievement merely on account of its size, but an achievement that was not worth while. The most satisfactory of his decorative work is the picture of "Chaos" (No. 1,647), which was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1896. It re-echoes his early admiration for Greek sculpture, and while expressing something fundamental, restrains expression within the limits of pure decoration. In all his work there is a certain decorative force; it shows particularly in such pictures as "Jonah" (No. 1,636) and "For he had Great Possessions" (No. 1,632).

In his early work the paint is smooth and fluent as in "Echo" and "Boccaccio," but after 1853 it changed completely. It became dry and granulated, built up with one colour drawn and dragged over another. It suited his purpose, which was not the expression of immediate emotion, but it naturally lacked all spontaneity, freshness, and charm. Often his paint has the appearance of having been put on with a trowel. His design is invariably massive and simple, but it is frequently spoiled by irrelevant detail as in the picture of "Time, Death, and Judgement" (No. 1,693)—a latish picture, about 1881 or 1882—when the general effect is broken up by uncontrolled and quite insignificant lines of drapery. He admired the Venetian colour and tried to imitate it, but his use of it was decorative and not essential.

His irresistible predilection for ethical ideas led him into disaster. His potentialities as an artist were destroyed by this proclivity. He made an attempt, doomed to a failure which he did not recognize, to express concepts in paint. That is beyond the means and not within the purpose of art. His picture of "Hope" (No. 1,640) was once exceedingly popular—a late picture painted in 1885. But it is impossible to express "Hope" by means of plastic art. The picture actually represents a blindfolded girl seated on a dome or globe twanging the remaining string of a home-made musical instrument enveloped in a vague and

mysterious blue-green atmosphere. The elegant figure is remotely Greek, generalized and vague, clad in a clinging garment reminiscent of Albert Moore. Its title "Hope" is, as it were, a courtesy title. It might be called, with equal propriety, many other things. It is a sort of pretension in which the spectator plays a necessary part.

Many of Watts's big works lack simplicity and emphasis : everything in them is of equal importance. For this reason his paintings of single figures are much better. "Faith" (No. 1,639), for example, is more eloquent, although it might be called "Indecision" with equal justification. But the richness intended in the colour is spoilt and degraded by mixture with a brown tone.

Two of his best works are "Jonah" (No. 1,636) and "For he had Great Possessions" (No. 1,632). The ideas expressed in these pictures are more nearly intuitions than concepts, and therefore within the compass of art. "Jonah" is impressive ; it is at once sinister, mythical, and fanatic. If the drawing fail in the painting of the arms, the picture is none the less conclusive. The "Great Possessions" has a real beauty. Indeed, it is one of the few pictures of Watts that is simple and beautiful. It is his nearest approach to a genuine work of art. The colour is harmonious ; the tones are closely related and essential ; there is subtlety in the gradations ; the colour is expressive, and not painted in slabs as an added decorative value. The silhouette of the figure is pleasing, and the lights make a sort of inner or subsidiary pattern. The three panels of the creation of woman (Nos. 1,642-1,644) have a decorative beauty and a wealth of suggestion which is effective because it is pictorial in the first instance and allegorical only on consideration. Like Reynolds, whom in some respects he resembles, Watts had a certain gift for painting babies. This is shown rather charmingly in "The Spirit of Christianity" (No. 1,637), one of his very few emotional pictures. The landscape at the foot of this picture is typical of all his work in this direction. It has construction, but is descriptive rather than real. Most of his pictures were presented to the Gallery by the artist in 1897, for Watts had a large generosity which was not always appreciated by public bodies.

Consideration of the work of Burne-Jones, like that of Watts, reveals a certain confusion of thought which is frequently met with in the attitude of the English public towards works of art. There is evidence of it in the Pre-Raphaelite School, and that is the smug assumption that high moral purpose or poetical remoteness of subject are enough in themselves to create a work of art. Art is not essentially concerned with either of



PLATE 11.—KING COPHETUA AND THE
BEGGAR MAID : Burne-Jones.

these things. Its aim is merely the expression of the emotion aroused in the artist by the contemplation of nature. The subject is of value only in so far as it has aroused emotion. We have seen that the most commonplace things have been the subject of great works of art.

Burne-Jones owed a certain evanescent popularity to the fact that he drew his subjects from mythological and poetical sources.

He was one of those young men, typical of the time, especially in Oxford, who made a cult of poetical romance.

He studied at Exeter College, Oxford, for the purpose of taking Holy Orders. There, in 1852, he met William Morris and R. W. Dixon, and two years later he heard of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He began to make drawings in illustration of ballads and fairy mythology. The following year—he was then twenty-two—he made a tour in France with Morris, visiting Abbeville, Amiens, Beauvais, and Paris. On the quay at Le Havre the two young students determined to be artists. On his return he met Rossetti and settled in London. In 1857 Mr. Plint gave him a commission for two pictures of the Blessed Damozel as designs for stained glass, a method of expression to which his talent was peculiarly adapted. Two years later he travelled in Northern Italy.

From 1860 to 1865 was a period of water-colour painting, and during that time he produced "The Merciful Knight" (1863) and "The Wine of Circe" (1863), two of his best pictures. For some years after that he travelled in Italy. In 1865 he took to oil-painting, exhibiting the "Mirror of Venus" at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1867. From 1881 to 1890 he worked at mosaic, mainly for the American Church in Rome, and in 1891 he began his famous illustration for the Kelmscott Press.

Burne-Jones has been greatly praised for his drawings. It is true that he drew with care and delicacy, but never with freedom and power. He made a habit of drawing, but he always seems to be self-conscious, as though he knew he had a reputation to sustain. His rougher drawings, done as free studies for pictures, are stronger and more spontaneous.

His oil-paintings are represented by two important examples, "The Golden Stairs" (No. 4,005) and "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" (No. 1,771), which are both mainly decorative pictures. While these show the timidity and lack of cleverness in his painting, they also reveal certain weaknesses in decoration. Although Burne-Jones was a good designer he was hampered by his use of oil-paint, which was not his *métier*, and it is interesting to see how an artist's mind may hesitate and be confused when he is not using his right medium. He was at his best

when inventing designs for tapestry and stained-glass windows. Although these designs might be made in oil-paint, they had not to be considered primarily as oil-paintings but were to be carried out in another medium, so that he did not feel he was called upon to produce an oil-painting. One is aware of this self-consciousness in all his paintings. One feels something of it even in his drawings. His drawings lack freedom and vigour—they look amateurish—when he is deliberately making a drawing as such; but when a drawing is made as a study for some one purpose, it could show vigour, roughness, and vitality, as one sees in the drawing of "Clerk Saunders," which was done as a study for the picture.

In "The Golden Stairs" the decorative effect is lost in prettiness and swamped in a flood of detail. There is a certain hesitancy between decoration and realism, and one can accept the picture as neither.

The impulse—the basis of the design—is excellent. It is built on big lines, but the execution is tentative and weakly realistic. The fact that the figures at the top of the stairs are (or rather appear to be) bigger than the nearer figures at the foot, produces a puzzling effect of incongruity which is destructive of harmony.

Though he had a real sense of decoration, and often showed a lively rhythm in the disposition of his figures, these qualities are frequently overshadowed, as in the "Temple of Love" (No. 3,452), by his sentimental love of story which he appeared unable to control.

Burne-Jones was first of all an illustrator, and this gift spoilt him as an artist.

The "King Cophetua" suffers from the painter's vagueness of purpose. There is no feeling of climax in the picture, or any sense of relative importance. The king seated at the feet of the beggar maid is scarcely more important than the background.

The other design for the subject (No. 3,454), though much less original, is much more vigorous. The figure of the king in red and brown silhouetted against white marble bending down to lift the beggar maid is very effective. The picture also lacks dramatic effect, and is too incidental. But it shows that Burne-Jones could paint freely enough when he was working on a study. The truth seems to be that when he was painting what was to be a "finished" picture he tried to get what he considered to be "quality" in his paint, and he was unable to do it. He was then not using this medium strictly as a means to an end, but was, to some extent, making it an end in itself.

He appears to have been more deeply moved by the subject of "Clerk

Saunders." The large water-colour of this subject (No. 4,390) is his nearest approach to the expression of passion. It is messy as a water-colour, woolly, and lacking in transparency and freshness, but he has succeeded in expressing something of his feeling. It "comes home" more definitely than any of his other paintings, which are usually remote and cold, and weak in expression of emotion.

It seems fairly clear that Burne-Jones got lost in a wave of mediæval sentimentality, and instead of receiving direct impressions from life—the only stuff from which works of art can be made—he invented figures (which have little conviction) from his imagination, which had been fed on literature and not sufficiently nourished by direct experience of life.

The two little early paintings of "Clara and Sidonia von Bork," which belong to Mr. Graham Robertson, have a direct and very definite quality which he afterwards lost. They have something of the inevitable firmness and insistence on pattern of stained-glass windows. If he could have continued along those lines, he might have developed into a painter of a definite originality. But literature was too much for him—his talent was not for painting.

He was fertile in the invention of designs to be executed in tapestry, glass, or woodcut, and it is on those that his fame, if it survive, will rest.

Although friendly with the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood he did not share their aims or intentions, although he resembles them in his love of old legend and romance. He never attempted to express nature with their fidelity—indeed there is no evidence in his work that he was ever moved by natural effect or natural beauty—but he was a characteristic and outstanding figure in the flood of mediæval romance which invaded Oxford in the 'fifties, and which absorbed a good deal of talent that might have been better employed. The movement will always have a certain interest, although not as a vital impulse in the development of art.

Burne-Jones's work has led to nothing ; it is regarded to-day rather as a curiosity, a survival of an attractive but retrograde and perhaps somewhat morbid love of the past. It is an example, also, of the idea that still persists in some quarters that the fineness and even remoteness of subject has something to do with the quality of art.

XI

THE LATER VICTORIANS

THE heading of this chapter is one rather of convenience than strictly denoting a definite period. Queen Victoria died in 1901, but one would not suggest that the kind of British art which flourished during her reign ended with that date. Roughly the term is meant to cover those painters who, from 1860 or thereabouts, carried on the conventions of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, without suffering any particular influence which might have changed their attitude towards art, if their comfortable acceptance of prevailing ideas could be described as an attitude.

The painters of the period were subjected to no such violent onslaughts as have assailed the artists of the early twentieth century. The most lively disturbance was that of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which merely ruffled the surface of Victorian complacency and expired without having achieved any radical change. Whistler was a disturbing element, but he had no more effect on British art than the presence of a wasp has on the religious beliefs of a tea-party. The Glasgow School, a late blossom from a stray seed blown over from the Barbizon School, flourished towards the end of the century, being fortified and revictualled by the growing influence of Bastien-Lepage. The Glasgow School, which has since allowed its initiative to pass to Edinburgh, represented the best British art of the time. It had an influence on the Southerners as regards style of painting, when Pettie, Orchardson, and others journeyed to London. An even more salutary influence from the same source, fortified by the growing admiration for Bastien-Lepage, contributed notably towards the founding of the Newlyn School, and with it that tendency towards nature and away from "school" which showed itself in the work of such admirable painters as Clausen, Edward Stott, and La Thangue. But the bulk of the later Victorian art did not differ in any fundamental respect from that of the earlier. There was an improvement in taste, and there was greater individuality in the methods of painting. But the basis of it all was much the same. Anecdote or story formed the subject-matter of



PLATE 12.—HOPE : Watts.



LE REPAS DES PAUVRES : Legros.

every picture, except in the paintings of landscape or sea. But even the last frequently formed the setting for some sentimental story, although there was nothing perhaps quite so crude as Collins nor among the animal painters so glossy as Landseer.

In the choice of subject the sentimental and the pathetic prevailed over the historical—the taste for the latter had been almost fanned into a flame by Benjamin West, since when it had shown itself in certain desultory efforts in the more heroic vein.

Among the painters of the latter part of the nineteenth century are certain rather exceptional figures who are in it, but not of it. Prominent among them was Alphonse Legros (1837–1911), the French painter who came to England at the age of twenty-six. Legros was evidently an inspiring teacher, but he was not a great artist. He followed the classical

tradition, and the allotments he cultivated were singularly arid, since they produced nothing containing any nourishment, notwithstanding his unremitting labours. "Le Repas des Pauvres" (No. 2,898) showed a passing interest in Rembrandt, and with it a touch of the human interest which is inseparable from that great master. This picture has a place apart in Legros's work, although one may confess to the remnants of an ancient affection for the "Femmes en Prière" (No. 1,501), which is so cold and pure that one now neither cares whether it is true or not.

The imitation of a tradition is, like all imitation, a negative thing, and one cannot help feeling *that*, when contemplating "Cupid and Psyche" (No. 3,274), or "Rehearsing the Service" (No. 3,135). There is no emotion to gladden the heart, only a cold scholarship; but that same scholarship proved of some value during the years when Legros was teaching at South Kensington, and then at the Slade School. His students received a sound grounding in the Old Masters—particularly in their drawings; after that it was a case of the survival of the fittest, and those who had sufficient personality could look back to their old master with gratitude, while those who had not, remained, like Legros himself, mere servers at a superseded altar.

But there was one painter who was an artist and something of a poet. Frederick Walker (1840-75) had a genuine feeling for the beautiful and the pathetic, for all he was so excellent an illustrator. He went beyond the conventions of his time, although he was by no means free of them. He played truant from his academy, and at such moments he produced his best work. Not "The Plough" (No. 3,158 at Trafalgar Square), which is marred by its ridiculous Grecian figures and its too classical horses, but "The Vagrants" (No. 1,209) shows the best of the spoils he brought back. Even the latter picture is not without some signs of his incurable idealism, for he dared not be wholly a realist, and could not escape from the toils of tradition. But his work had feeling and a quiet lyrical quality. "The Harbour of Refuge" (No. 1,391) might have been even a great picture could Walker have forgotten the Elgin Marbles. But he could not clear his mind of the classical cant. And we, who are posterity, cannot delight in his luminous sky, his quiet evening feeling, the pathos of the group on the left, for we see only that his "Labourer mowing the Daisy-sprinkled Grass" was a ridiculous imposture.

Training, teaching, culture; those are things that have to be lived down, to be sunk without trace, before an artist can express freely the best that is in him. We do not care where Velazquez was trained or who

taught El Greco, and it is only in the early works of Rembrandt, where we can trace their sources, that we are conscious—dare we say of boredom?—at least of the effort of the painter.

The greatness of an artist is only manifest when he has freed himself from the shackles of his training, and can express the fullness of his personality in his own way, albeit with the skill which his training has given him.

Hardly any of our later Victorian painters escaped from their shackles. Possibly they dared not let go the rope, for they knew not how to swim. But one of them, although he was only very occasionally a painter, must be numbered amongst the greatest English artists. Charles Keene (1823–91) was an illustrator by profession and an artist by nature. I do not know whether his "Portrait of the Artist" (No. 3,644) is his only oil-painting or not, but it is a masterly performance. Skill, certainty, style—it has them all—and that mysterious thing which is called "quality." Like all genuine works of art, it defies description. One may speak of the truth of its tone, the harmony of its arrangement, the ease with which it has grown on the canvas, but the essence of that "quality" is still unspoken. Unfortunately it is only bad pictures that make good "copy." One might expand into pages over Orchardson's "Napoleon on board the *Bellerophon*" (No. 1,601), but before Keene's little portrait one can say only that it is beautiful and full of character. Keene is the exception that proves the rule that illustrators are seldom artists. For over thirty years he illustrated jokes for *Punch*, and his drawings are all works of art. He could conceive a scene—the scene suggested by the subject—but it was immediately transferred from literature to nature, and he began, as it were, *de novo* to draw from nature with all the emotion that nature aroused in him.

But among the other painters of the period one could mention a hundred names without revealing an artist of originality, either among those who painted subjects or those who painted animals, landscapes, and sea. On regarding Brett's picture of "Britannia's Realm" (No. 1,617), one might endorse Whistler's comment, "Tin! if you threw a stone on to this it would make a rumbling noise," or one might turn to Holl's two little pictures, "Hush" (No. 1,535) and "Hushed" (No. 1,536), and find consolation in their real painter-like qualities, which are not marred by their obvious sentimentality. But one must indeed be ignorant of art to experience pleasure in Alma-Tadema's meticulously painted details—be they never so Greek, Roman, or Egyptian—which

are so like coloured photographs. They represent one side of Victorian taste—the delight in the “hand-painted.”

Edgar Bundy (1862–1922) might be regarded as Alma-Tadema on a large scale, although “The Morning of Sedgemoor” (No. 1,960) is much above his average work; but one sinks to a lower level with the work of Sir Frank Dicksee (1853–1928), where sentimentality has touched the true level of Victorian mawkishness in “Harmony” (No. 1,839), painted in 1877, although “The Two Crowns” (No. 1,839), twenty-three years later, scarcely shows the maturity of experience. Both these pictures were Chantrey purchases.

Among the sentimental school one finds many painters varying in skill but united in sentiment. Sir Luke Fildes’s popularity is due to his picture “The Doctor” (No. 1,522), the chief interest of which lies in the pathetic story which is its subject. Apart from that—merely as a painting—it is conventional and uninteresting. As an academic study it is doubtless most efficient, but it is dreary in execution and incredibly poor in perception.

Leighton and Poynter might be bracketed together, except that the latter was a better scholar and a better craftsman. The former was a typical product of Victorian culture—he had every accomplishment. “The Bath of Psyche” (No. 1,574) is almost incredibly poor both in handling and conception. Its sickly sweetness is a poor substitute for truth, and his other picture, “And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it” (No. 1,511), has a literal commonness which makes it revolting. One may think of the subject as it might have been painted by an artist like Daumier, and realize once more how little the essence of a work of art is to be found in its subject.

Poynter was a better painter than Leighton, though dull enough. Whether he was a better scholar is immaterial. “A Visit to Æsculapius” (No. 1,586) no doubt has merits. One art critic, at least, has hailed it as a remarkable painting, but his touchstone was mathematical proportion. Mr. Bayes was probably right, according to his lights, but lights are so various. To another, those leathery ladies—Venus attended by the three Graces—are the very essence of boredom. There is neither truth nor wit in this presentation. And if it merely demonstrates that Sir E. J. Poynter could draw in his very dull academic way, and could spread on the paint with sufficient self-satisfaction, it is not enough, for there must arise a generation that knows not Poynter, and which, therefore, demands something fundamental in a work of art.



PLATE 13.—BETWEEN TWO FIRES: F. D. Millet.

There is a certain difficulty in dealing with the painters of this period. Their name is legion, but their contributions to art are not very varied.

It is simpler, in a way, to take the Scotsmen first. At that time the taste for art in Scotland was comparatively enlightened. Collections of the Barbizon School were formed at a time when the name of Corot was almost unknown in London. The Scottish painters who came to London brought with them a certain individuality, which had some slight effect in encouraging other painters to think for themselves. Pettie, Orchardson, and Reid introduced styles which were, at least, different from those taught in the schools of the Royal Academy. The first named had a vigorous personality which is expressed in the little "Portrait of the Artist" (No. 2,434), though it had evaporated by the time he painted "The Vigil" (No. 1,582), which is as Royal Academic as any Chantrey purchase need be.

Sir W. Q. Orchardson (1835-1910) was exquisitely Victorian in sentiment, but as Sir Willoughby Patterne had "a leg," so he had a style. His pictures "The First Cloud" (No. 1,520) and "Her Mother's Voice" (No. 1,521) are imbued with the sentiment of *The Family Herald*, but as paintings they have a real subtlety and delicacy. It is as though the Rev. R. J. Campbell had contrived to speak with the voice of Job. They are admired in spite of their subjects, as who should say, "I despise your texts, but I admire your diction." J. R. Reid (1851-1926) was a painter of a much robuster character, both in style and in choice of subjects. His pictures of rural life have the quality of simple truth, which gives them an interest which may endure. They are, at least, representations of real things. His picture of "Toil and Pleasure" (No. 1,600), which shows fox-hunters crossing a field of turnips with interrupted labourers looking on, may have the same sort of interest that Stubbs's pictures have now, when fox-hunting shall be done by aeroplane and speedy tanks. This picture was painted at Ashington in Sussex in 1879. The previous year he had painted "A Country Cricket Match" (No. 1,557), which, with its humour and curious character, is already a thing of the past. Reid has a very robust and direct technique. One feels, in his work, that the painting was means to an end; that he was not, like the majority of academic painters, seeking an excuse for the exercise of a school-made craft. The work of James Aumonier (1832-1911) is related to Reid's, but it is not so humorous nor so dramatic. "Sheep Washing in Sussex" (No. 1,619) is but an incident in an undistinguished landscape. It has no central interest, but it



TOIL AND PLEASURE : Reid.

is, at least, free from the kind of sentimentality which flowed so freely in those well-furnished days.

There is more satisfaction to be derived from the landscape painters than from the figure men, although some of the former contrived to supply the sentimental needs of their merchant patrons. The work of J. C. Hook (1819-1907) and Sir David Murray makes an eloquent contrast. The seascapes of the former are always the background of some trifling story. The story was the kernel of the matter ; the rest was dry, literal and descriptive. But in Sir David Murray's " My Love has gone A-sailing " (No. 1,614) there is some evidence of the painter's pleasure in painting ; of his delight in the bright strong colour, and the glamour of the warm evening effect. The title is merely a sop to convention. His other picture, " In the Country of Constable " (No. 1,926), if it is meant to challenge comparison with the great East Anglian master, shows the difference between passion and studentship ; between those pictures which originate from fundamental emotion and those which, proceeding from the opposite direction, are but occasions for the exercise of a trained technique.

There were not many painters of pure landscape ; their number increased towards the end of the century, when such excellent painters as Adrian Stokes and Arnesby Brown became prominent. But Henry Moore (1831-95) painted the sea for its own sake, although he was interested in its more ordinary aspects. He delighted in its vastness and breeziness, but there was little of the poet in his composition.

Figure painters abounded. They can be divided into two classes : those, purely academic, who invented subjects usually drawn from antiquity, and those who found their subjects in real life, but who approached them, not with plastic interest, but with their literary value—their interest as stories—chiefly in mind.

In neither case was the point of view artistic, but the latter had the sounder basis and, under the Glasgow School influence deriving from Barbizon and the naturalism of Bastien-Lepage, a number of painters were drawn together. The Newlyn School was formed, and other painters were working on similar lines in other parts of the country. Always, it must be remembered, the literary aspect of the matter—what the people were and what they were doing—was the main part of the inspiration ; not the artistic aspect, not the relations of tone, colour, form, not the rhythmic expression of design. Those things came in the twentieth century, and, again, on French instigation.

In the former and larger class of figure painters there were such men as Alma-Tadema, Poynter, Bundy, Frank Craig, Luke Fildes, Goodall, Leighton, Sadler, and many others. The latter class, the naturalistic painters, included men of greater importance, as Stanhope Forbes, Bramley, J. R. Reid, La Thangue, Tuke, Clausen, and their work, because it is fundamentally sound, is capable of development. In their case the question of personality and temperament was of more moment than the question of skill and erudition. The photographic mind of an Alma-Tadema may be repeated in at least one of the leaders of the Newlyn School, but there was a difference which put the latter inevitably on a higher level. And in the case of painters finding inspiration in nature, and not in books, there was greater warmth of feeling; greater and unsought variety of expression: things which might awaken an equal response and something deeper than the cold admiration which is the most that can be aroused by a painting by Alma-Tadema, be it never so skilful and accomplished.

There is sentiment in La Thangue's "Man with the Scythe" (No. 1,605), but it is natural, simple, and inherent in the subject, and the painting has a beauty of tone and arrangement.

And Sir George Clausen has found an infinite variety in nature, and his technique has grown and changed with his perception. At first he was frankly attracted by Bastien-Lepage, and his picture, "The Girl at the Gate" (No. 1,612), of 1889, pays homage to that master. It is an old favourite, which has not yet lost its power to please. That simple study of the peasant girl hesitant at the gate of a cottage garden is a psychological study—a profound portrait—which has captured something which is passing, if it has not already passed away. A different mood, a livelier attitude, is expressed in "The Gleaners Returning" (No. 2,259), which is nineteen years later than the other picture. The reflective and lyrical spirit has been superseded by the active with an increase of vitality.

There is appreciation of natural beauty and an honest style of painting in Tuke's "August Blue" (No. 1,613). Intensity of expression is arrested by its matter-of-fact perception, which predominates in his other and earlier picture "All Hands to the Pump" (No. 1,618).

Unreality of subject-matter as the dominant force in English painting expired with Marcus Stone and Waterhouse. The languishing sentimentality of the former is now merely a curiosity; while the mythology and Tennysonian idylls of the latter scarcely "earn a passing sigh."



PLATE 14.—A SILENT GREETING : Alma-Tadema

XII

SARGENT AND THE LATER PORTRAIT PAINTERS

THE work of the modern portrait painters differs from that of the earlier masters in being more realistic in intention. It is no longer considered either essential or flattering to pose ladies as Diana or Hebe or other mythological figures, or to hint at some latent greatness of a man by the introduction of columns or red curtains in the background, with their often incongruous suggestion that the subject dwelt in marble halls or lived in a state of senatorial dignity.

There is usually some attempt at actual truth and the realization of essential personality in a not wholly impossible environment. It may be that the changed habit of the regular portrait painter has not resulted in the achievement of a greater number of works of art. But that is because the exigencies of portrait painting are not conducive to the production of works of art. One may, indeed, draw a distinction between portrait painters and professional portrait painters.

Artists such as Degas, Sickert, Monet, Bonnard, Wilson Steer, and Cézanne have painted portraits for their own pleasure, and in the quest of quiet truth they have been able to experience the joy of personal expression. They were not governed by the limiting conditions of the regular portrait painters, to whom the invention and use of a more or less arbitrary method becomes almost a necessity. Under those conditions the attainment of a *pure* work of art is impossible. Cézanne painted portraits as he painted landscape or still-life, and each one represents the study of a particular moment, a special effect, a personal mood, and consequently his slightest work has a moving interest. But to the professional portrait painter such a practice is clearly impossible. One has but to enter the Sargent Gallery to see that all the work of that painter, who was the arch-type of the modern portraitist, is essentially the same; only the subjects and arrangements are different. The paintings are not works of art but the exercise—the brilliant exercise—of a definite method. Fundamentally they are not different from photographs.

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) had a great influence on the younger portrait painters of his day. Trained in the brilliantly superficial school of Carolus-Duran, he never quite freed himself from the meretricious influence of that facile master, although his earlier work shows an earnestness and a concern with simple truth which was absent from his later and more brilliant canvases.

Sargent is a case of the confusion between means and ends ; of the exploitation of a method for its own sake. His failure as an artist was the result of his success as a portrait painter. There are many other instances of this, both in our own time and in the eighteenth century.

Sargent was naturally endowed with a brilliant and complete talent. The brilliance of his execution was of immense value in his practice as a portrait painter, but it dominated his perception, and its use, for him, became the source, one might think, of almost sufficient satisfaction.

In his comparatively early work, "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose" (No. 1,615), which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887, there is a charm of colour, and a delicacy of feeling and perception, which could find no life under the pressure of the demands made upon him in his professional career. That picture stands out like a flower among his later portraits with their conventional brown backgrounds.

Sargent's brilliant cleverness never failed him ; his sure hand and quick eye, which enabled him to express drawing, modelling, and substance with one stroke of the brush, his extraordinary control, are fascinating in their results, but something deeper and more subtle is required for endurance. Much of Sargent's work is artistically false, particularly false in tone and its relationships. His work is deficient in those qualities of subtle and profound truth which have given eternal life to the portraits of Velazquez, Rembrandt, and a few other masters.

His almost instantaneous grasp of personal peculiarity is seen at its best in his brilliant series of the Wertheimer family. All these paintings are false in tone—in their values. In the relation of the heads to the background there is no attempt at truth. That impression one receives, of limelight on the face against an exaggerated dark background, so striking in an exhibition, becomes disagreeable on familiarity.

The unfinished portrait of Edward Wertheimer (No. 3,710) has actually more unity and truth of tone than most of his work, limited and conventional as it is in colour. But it has not been carried very far. The exaggerated high lights with their artificial brilliance, so disturbing to unity, have not been introduced.

His method is seen at its best in the portrait of Asher Wertheimer (No. 3,705), which is a piece of vivid descriptive painting.

But truth of tone, and those qualities of subtle relationships which give enchantment to a work of art, are sadly lacking. The subject is standing in a room as dark as a cellar. The spot-light is on his face. It is a striking effect, but wearisome. The eye is intrigued, the mind unmoved. All the painter's audacious execution is there; his sure and amazing touch. We are asked always to be content with his amazing cleverness and to forgo the pleasure that only poetry can give.

Sargent's work is good but copious. There is much repetition—inevitable, perhaps, in the circumstances. One is struck in this collection by the prevailing tones of brown and black, so poor a substitute for the subtle beauty of natural colour, and by the showiness of exaggerated effect. The picture of Ena and Betty Wertheimer (No. 3,708) is a *tour de force*, unrivalled probably in modern art for dexterity and sheer painting ability. It is a brilliant presentation of superficial appearance, with a sure eye for character and a touch of impudence and caricature. But the relations—the values—are artistically vulgar. No artist could have been content with them. One cannot imagine Cézanne, Degas, Pissarro or Sickert or Steer producing them. Manet might have let them pass, for he too delighted in the display of his own cleverness. But he would have revised it.

There is an excellent copy by Sargent of Velazquez's famous painting of "Las Meninas," which shows up the English painter's work, for in that great picture the tones and values are exquisite and endow it with a sense of poetry and mystery. Sargent has faithfully copied them, and the result exposes the falsity of his own work.

The early "Portrait of Madame Gautreau" (No. 4,102), an unfinished study for the portrait in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, has outstanding distinction. It has an eager freshness which increasing pressure of practice soon destroyed. There was no longer any problem; they had been solved once and for all. "The Mount is mute, the Channel dry," but the hand worked on.

The influence that Sargent had on painters and students in those days, when his brilliant display on the walls of Burlington House held them enthralled, has worn thin, and there is now much more individuality in the work of present-day portrait painters.

His particular followers, Robert Brough, Furse, Richard Jack, J. J.

Shannon, and De Glehn, never deserted him, pushing admiration to the length of imitation, but the master hand was unrivalled.

Robert Brough (1872-1905) indeed was no inconsiderable rival, but his career of growing success was cut short by his untimely death at the age of thirty-three. C. W. Furse (1868-1904) was an able imitator, who increased with the scale of his pictures the scenic aspect of his virtuosity with a corresponding loss of reality. His "Return from the Ride" (No. 1,963) is impressive by its size and by its almost uncontrolled brushwork, but how poor it is in perception, how lacking in mind. Its landscape background is the poorest sort of descriptive painting.

The influence of Sargent, who was undoubtedly the most brilliant painter of his time, was in some cases more or less indirect. An American, Sir J. J. Shannon (1862-1923), who came to England at the age of sixteen, felt its effects without directly imitating the work of the older artist. Shannon had not the same skill or the inventive powers of Sargent, but he had too much feeling to rest content with mere technical display. His unequal portrait of Phil May (No. 3,825) is fumbling and awkward compared with almost any of Sargent's paintings, but the intention is deeper, the painter's attitude towards nature is much warmer. His picture of "The Flower Girl" (No. 1,901) has qualities which are somewhat endearing, which come from the fact that the painter had a love for his subject and an interest in it which would be prohibited to a harassed and leisure-lacking portrait painter. It had a charm of natural colour which has been observed and not invented as part of a method.

Modern portrait painters may roughly be divided into realists, stylists, and independents. It is a question of aim and attitude. The distinction is more superficial than real.

The realists may be said to aim at simple truth of representation rather than at the cultivation of a certain method of expression. They include such painters as Herkomer, Collier, Strang, Russell, Rothenstein, and, greatest of all, Augustus John.

Roth Herkomer and Collier are merely literal, being concerned with the presentation of facts in a manner more or less superficial. Their work is prosaic and usually without charm. The former used photography to some extent. He is represented by one of his least interesting works, the "Portrait of Sir Henry Tate" (No. 3,517), not the most promising of subjects. The painting shows his great inferiority to Sargent.

The little "Portrait of Mrs. Huxley" (No. 4,378), by the Hon. John Collier, is a remarkably complete example of what passes superficially



PLATE 15.—NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE "BELLEROPHON": Orchardson.

for realism—a somewhat indefinite word. It is a good portrait, an objective statement of facts without any charm in the painting.

One of the most remarkable examples of imitative painters was William Strang (1859–1921). Nearly all his work was derived from other artists, and it is that fact that prevents it from being merely literal. He was strongly gifted technically as draughtsman, etcher, and painter, but his lack of feeling and originality reduced the value of his gifts, which did not include subtlety of perception.

There are a certain number of artists, some of them, the stiffest and best, who are more than portrait painters, but who have experimented with that branch of art with conspicuous success. Among them is Professor William Rothenstein. To him the painting of a portrait is like the painting of any other aspect of life; but he has a sense of character, and the restraint to investigate it thoroughly, just as he has investigated anything that has aroused his artistic interest. To him, charm and the more superficial attractiveness are of less value than the structure beneath appearances and the soul it embodies. He is perpendicular, uncompromising; too much so for popularity. He sees things as they are, as the saying is, which means that he sees them steadily, without *arrière pensée*, and with a determination to get at the truth. So he is dependent on his moments, and at times his work is somewhat literal and dry. But he is a real portrait painter; one whose aim is to express the essential character and personality of his sitter, and not the display of his own cleverness or an ability to give attractive qualities to his paint. His work is no catalogue of felicities. At times it acquires a quality that is actually disagreeable through overworking in the attempt to reveal the utmost, and in seeking for truth he is willing to sacrifice charm. His method is used strictly as a means to express the truth as he perceives it. That may involve a passing penalty but an ultimate gain.

He is perhaps not purely an artist, as he tries to paint things as he knows them to be rather than to express his reaction to them. At times too much of a naturalist and too objective, his work has at those moments a resulting coldness, and while he seizes the full content of his subject he sometimes misses some of its poetry.

It is true that any artistic performance requires perfect presence of mind, unconfused, unhurried by emotion, but the original emotional impulse must be preserved intact through all the processes of painting. Otherwise those qualities, that calmness and lack of confusion, may be positively repellent.

The greatest of the realists is Augustus John. There is no implied limitation in the word, for he is also essentially romantic.

John was as richly endowed with natural talents as any painter has ever been. Sargent's facility was no greater, but what a difference !

John is a great draughtsman with the *quality* of an artist, and that is a thing which is inherent in mind and personality. Never to be acquired. A comparison of his drawings with those of Sargent, for example, emphasizes this quality, and shows the inevitability of it where it exists. One feels in Sargent's drawings the working of the mind of an illustrator, a noter, a brilliant observer. He has an attractive directness, a force, and a snap. But John's drawing is emotionally expressive, and seems instinctively to transmute facts into emotional experience. He has two great portraits in the national collection : " The Smiling Woman " (No. 3,171) and " Madame Suggia " (No. 4,093). The greater a work of art the more difficult it is to write about it, because that mysterious quality which makes it a work of art is the very quality which cannot be described in words. The artfully effective and brilliant picture may be more easily described, for description is adequate and its qualities are obvious. But the soul of a great work, one that endures and gives perpetually renewed satisfaction, must be experienced at first hand ; it cannot be conveyed by words.

" The Smiling Woman " has an enduring quality. It has been on view in the Gallery since 1917, but custom has neither changed it nor made it stale. It is clever—brilliantly clever—but that is not the quality one feels in it ; that is subsidiary. The directness and force of its painting, the certain rhythm of its drawing, are attractive and satisfying things, but they are part of the whole and have value as being the means of expression. There is the complete and vivid realization of a personality—" a simple separate person "—but behind it and within it some fundamental and universal feeling is expressed.

There is a difference of some thirteen years between the two pictures—" The Smiling Woman " was painted about 1910—and it is difficult to say which is the finer painting.

There is more cleverness in " Madame Suggia," more experience, more facility. There is also in it the expression of that something more, yet compared with the earlier picture it has a touch of the commonplace. That is probably superficial, and belongs to the more conventional kind of subject and the more artificial treatment of it—the draped curtain, etc., the accepted signs of the regular portrait.

If the distinction may be permitted, a number of modern portrait painters may be called "stylists."

Their aim is not specially or exclusively the realization of the personality and character of their sitters, but their representation in a certain kind of manner, with a particular treatment of paint—a preservation of a certain quality of appearance.

Such painters as Philpot, Nicholson, McEvoy, and Lavery might be included among them, but the most important is Sir William Orpen.

Orpen was a rarely gifted artist, with a natural sense of style, a delicacy of touch, and a certain whimsical originality. He became a successful portrait painter. He too discovered the necessity of a definite method—a cast-iron method—to meet the demands for portraits, and the method he has adopted is one of the most attractive and effective: a black background, against which high lights glitter with a delusive effect, the half-tones put on clearly and crisply with no uncertain hand, impeccable and incisive drawing. He is master of this method, which has the merit of originality.

His two very charming paintings, "The Angler" (No. 2,997) and "Lady Orpen" (No. 3,549), show something of his earlier quality—his delicacy of perception, his charm of colour, and his appreciation of womanly beauty. One may compare them with the later "Sir William McCormick" (No. 3,629), or, better still, with the more recent "Portrait of Dame Madge Kendal" (No. 4,400), to see the gain and loss entailed by the later method. The "Dame Kendal" is an example of his method at its best. It is most effective in a mixed exhibition, and it is a charming presentation of a distinguished lady. But it does not go very deep, and its glitter is a little meretricious. No one could fail to be attracted by its cleverness and its showiness. It serves for its time; it has its day.

Particular concern with the surface quality and appearance of his paint imposes limitations on an artist. Whistler's portraits lack vitality and appear unreal because of his determination to fit his sitters into certain schemes which had no essential connection with their character and were not actually expressive of life. In the same way William Nicholson has very definite ideas of what his portraits ought to look like. He does not surrender himself to nature and get the utmost he can out of it. He uses it as an excuse for the production of a very refined object of art. His work is the survival of the doctrine of "art for art's sake." Some of his portraits, such as that of "Miss Jekyll" (No. 3,617), are delicately true in character, but so reserved that they dare tell only very

little. The "Lady in Furs" (No. 3,689) is so slight as to be little more than a whisper. Like Whistler's, his people live always in the twilight.

Another painter who is more concerned with style than reality, G. W. Philpot, tells us more about his skill and taste than about life and truth and his personal reactions to it. His remarkable gifts are certainly not well represented by "The Man in Black" (No. 3,002) and "A Young Breton" (No. 3,218), which remind one of so-called "artistic" photographs, although the former painting shows something of his unrivalled ability for finding the exact touch.

His paintings have a certain poetic beauty, but their charm seems to be borrowed from literature. His people seem to be remote from life, and to tell us little about it or themselves. They aspire to a pattern or to a style, a little too precious for vitality.

To some extent Sir John Lavery is tethered by the Whistler tradition. He has flights towards the wider heaven of reality, but is continually brought back to earth. Like all painters who are more or less founded on Whistler, he has a charming sense of tone. His style is his own and not unattractive. His pictures may be easily recognized; one feels that it is a good Lavery, but one is not stimulated to life. "La Morte du Cygne" (No. 3,000), which represents the Russian dancer Anna Pavlova sinking down at the end of her dance, is not a fair example of his work. Those who had the privilege of witnessing that dance must agree that nothing of its mystery, intangible beauty, and subtle colour is captured in this dismal picture with its negative blacks, greys, and browns.

To paint within a limited style is safe and leads to success, but it is far from satisfying in the long run; it is to forsake the vast and inexhaustible resources of nature for the devitalizing atmosphere of a twilit room. It savours more of the craftsman than the artist.

Ambrose McEvoy (1878-1927), a highly-gifted painter, was a realist become stylist. His earlier and realistic work is represented rather by interiors with figures and other genre pictures than by portraits. His early "Portrait" (No. 2,999) represents Sir William Jowitt. It is largely, though not purely, realistic in intention. A good study of character, one feels, nevertheless, that the artist was too concerned with the surface qualities of his paint to let himself go very deeply into personality. Where Rothenstein would have let the lesser charms go in his larger sincerity, in his endeavour to get the utmost of life and its meaning, McEvoy limited his expression in his endeavour to preserve them. In the latter part of his life he became involved in the effects on faces, of complicated



PLATE 16.—JUNE IN THE AUSTRIAN TYROL: MacWhirter.

lighting, an idea derived from the theatre. This was to exchange the greater for the less with a vengeance. In his later charming work the cunningly contrived effects of double lights, reflected lights; artificial lights absorbed him, and in their subtle play tangibility, substance, reality were lost. All these lights did but obscure the larger and nobler issue.

In conclusion, there are two distinguished artists who may be called occasional portrait painters. P. Wilson Steer and Professor Henry Tonks have both painted portraits when moved to do so. Both are artists of real substance; neither would have adopted the painting of portraits as a profession. That would be inevitably to surrender their liberty of conscience as artists.

Steer's "Portrait of Mrs. Raynes" (No. 3,803) is one of the finest of modern portraits, because it is painted out of affection and the desire for simple truth. It is therefore realistic but also full of style—a natural style that comes from the definite use of paint to express a clear vision, not the self-conscious style which is deliberately cultivated.

One can feel something of the artist's delight in painting every detail of the old seamed face full of doggedly won experience. The small sensitive touch of the brush needed for the expression of such subtle perception is quite unlike the painter's usual broad and vigorous handling, and shows how flexible is his technique and how adapted to the varying nature of his intuition. It is a lesson to those painters who have an acquired method which they apply invariably to everything they are painting.

The somewhat rare essays in portraiture of Professor Henry Tonks are not particularly well represented by his uncompromising portrait of himself (No. 3,231), but it is free from the over-carefulness which sometimes characterizes his compositions. Too often he appears to be restrained by the professorial conscience, as though he feared that whatever he produced might be held by his students as evidence against him. So his carefully composed pictures are sometimes lacking in spontaneity and impulse though organized on lines which would be a lesson in his own academy. Then they are perhaps, as Henry James has written, "a part of what was cleanest and sanest and dullest in humanity." But in his freer and less restrained moments, particularly when using pastel, he has produced some of the most delightful of smaller portraits which are real works of art.

XIII

NEW ENGLISH ART

MODERN art in England may not owe its right of free expression entirely to the foundation of the New English Art Club in 1886. That right could not in any case have been permanently frustrated. Nor can art for ever be "made tongue-tied by authority." But that event did indeed hasten the day of its emancipation and help to make the new ideas in art more widely known.

In these days, with their extraordinary growth of art galleries and art societies, it is perhaps difficult to realize the state of affairs in the art world some forty-five years ago. The Royal Academy, a powerfully endowed institution, was then almost without a rival. It called the tune without paying the piper.

Owing to the strength of its position it had a far-reaching influence on public taste. Its chief rival, the pleasant New Gallery, where some of those rejected by the Academy found a refuge, suffered, with all the minor galleries, the disadvantage of the financial struggle.

The idea of the New English Art Club was by no means revolutionary, it was a plea for free speech and the necessity of providing a place where artists who were unrecognized by the Academy or were antagonistic to its spirit could exhibit their work. The idea originated in Paris, and was discussed there during the years from 1880 to 1886. It was at first intended to limit the membership to artists who had studied in France. It was natural that such artists, brought up in the stimulating atmosphere of Paris, should be more dissatisfied with the limited outlook and hide-bound conventions that dominated the Academy than those who had stayed at home and known no other influence. But the Club soon exceeded its original purposes, and for many years its exhibitions provided the chief impetus to young and more progressive painters who could find only the most meagre nourishment in the arid atmosphere of Burlington House.

The first exhibition in 1886 included the work of some fifty members

and invited artists ; the following year this number had been increased to eighty-five. It was a group that well represented, at that time, what was considered advanced art. To-day much of it is *vieux jeu*. In the second exhibition there were only two Frenchmen—Jacques Blanche and Théodore Roussel—but it was comprehensive, and artists of such varied outlook as Aumonier, Bramley, James Charles, Clausen, Mark Fisher, Hacker, Lavery, Peppercorn, J. J. Shannon, Sargent, Wilson Steer, Edward Stott, Tuke, and Wyllie participated.

Happily Wilson Steer, an original member, is still painting, although most of his fellow exhibitors have gone.

In those days Steer's work was still under French Impressionist influence. His later painting is more distinctively English, but the forces which moulded his earlier work have left their traces with happy effect on the art which he has gradually developed from Constable and Turner. The exhibition of his work held at Millbank in 1929 showed him submitting to a variety of influences at different times, yet the more he submitted the more he was the same. There were occasional lapses with odd effect in the march of his progress ; moments when he stepped aside into strange side-paths, only to emerge again on the main road, advancing with renewed vigour. His work is well represented in the permanent collection, most of the stages of development being shown. The remarkable thing about it is that he has kept a freshness and an interest after so much experience, being able to produce in 1922, at the age of sixty-two, so fine a painting as his "Portrait of Mrs. Raynes" (No. 3,803), which, with all its maturity, is really youthful in its keen interest. Though his handling is so characteristic, he had, unlike the Royal Academicians, no set technique. In that he was an artist. He not only recognized the limitation of his material, but he realized that different impressions demand different expressions. His instinct in those matters had not been overlaid by academic training. "Yachts" (No. 3,668), painted in 1893, reminiscent of Monet, serves to represent the original (or perhaps the secondary) French influence. It was a passing phase. More characteristic of his early emancipation—his English work—is the picture of "Chepstow Castle" (No. 2,473) which he painted in 1905. There is something of the authentic Steer in it ; some quality that recurs again and again in his work and often in his water-colours ; it is not derivative ; it recalls no other painter. It was New English art at its best—vivid, luminous, personal.

As an illustration of the variety of his methods there is "The Music

Room" (No. 2,872), painted the same year but very different in its heavy impasto, piled up to get all the sparkling effect of afternoon sunlight—a curious, outstanding work. For he, too, could sacrifice charm of pigment in the cause of truth, for all he had such a light and even elegant touch when it suited his mood.

Some of those light, airy effects of sailing-boats becalmed on placid seas at sunset are painted with a minimum of effort—or of apparent effort. And his water-colours, with their masterly simplicity and vigour, are almost as good as Turner at his best. "Richmond Castle" (No. 3,193) of 1903 is another aspect; Constable, but Constable become, perhaps, a little erratic. It is expressive though it stops short, limited by too restricted a range of colour. "The Toilet of Venus" (No. 4,272) is also different, and shows Steer's susceptibility to French eighteenth-century painting. It is scarcely homage to Watteau as the colour is so restricted, not gay but almost dreary; rather like Watteau through the eyes of Whistler. But it has a beautiful quality, a subtle, suggestive power, and a fluid handling which could hardly have been expected of the painter of "The Music Room." The lesson of Steer is freedom; freedom of perception, of vision, and the means of expression, and that, of course, implies sincerity. From him other younger English painters should have gained much. His "Portrait of Mrs. Cyprian Williams" (No. 4,422), painted in 1899, shows Steer experimenting in the Japanese manner which came to England through Whistler.

The landscape work of Steer largely represents the traditional English art seen and developed through a new personality. There was another influence at work which was not so English, and was too personal to result in anything but rather slavish imitation on the part of its admirers. I refer to a painter who, though prominent in the school, was, as to his point of view, hardly of it, Richard Walter Sickert. He, too, is distinguished by his artistic integrity, and by an unswerving loyalty to his art.

Originally a pupil of Whistler, he, recognizing the weakness of the "Master," turned more and more towards essential expression of real life and has kinship with the French masters—Degas, Vuillard, and Bonnard.

His impeccable sense of tone was no doubt fostered by study with Whistler, but it must have been inborn, could hardly have been acquired in such a degree of truth and beauty, with ever so much study and application. Those things are fundamental when they are so inevitably the essence of personal expression. His colour is effective and intriguing.



PLATE 17.—THE VIGIL : Pettie.

But his method of expression is not by any means by pure colour but by colour as seen in tone—by tone values rather than by colour values. His witty point of view, which gives distinction to all his painting, is not the least of his charms. And his subject-matter, those aspects of life in which he especially delights, is original and amusing. He delights in painting those pictures which in the eighteenth century were called “conversation pieces”; but how different, how personal and intimate, is his work. Even Zoffany, who is now recognized as one of the best painters of the eighteenth century, seems formal and descriptive in comparison with Sickert.

The latter found many of his subjects in circles where few, if any, had cared to look for them—among the lower and working classes. In the purlieus of Camden Town and some of the less fashionable districts of London, where human nature is most natural and unaffected, he found many scenes from the *comédie humaine* which are delightful in their wit and character. Beauty “in the meanest and highest forms of the Common” was certainly revealed to him.

Though much of his work is a commentary on life, and keen interest in humanity is the basis of much of his art, yet what may be literary in the source of his inspiration is always subservient to the artistic.

He is one of the few artists who has remained unaffected by external movements and “discoveries” in art, but he has pursued the line of personal expression with the idea of pleasing only himself. He is still developing, and in his latest work has found a new sense of colour expression. His method is a strictly logical one—one that he has evolved by himself out of the lessons of experience and not those of the art master. It is much the same as that used by French Impressionists, with the difference that the latter analysed the appearance of the scene into colour values, whereas Sickert reduces it to tonal values.

That early “Portrait of George Moore” (No. 3,181) is more or less in the Whistler manner—a very fluid touch, with a quietness, a close relation of tones. It has that appearance of having been done so easily—as it were without thought—that Whistler prized so highly. That is no longer valued, and never was of great importance. But this portrait has real personality, and is a witty, amusing comment. More might have been revealed, but the technique of it imposes rigid restraint. The delightful painting of the “Café des Tribunaux, Dieppe” (No. 3,182), is in much the same manner. The wonderful shop window on the right of the canvas, reflecting the street, is a source of pleasure always renewed.

And a sense of satisfaction is aroused by the true relations of the tones, although they are not by any means near the key of nature.

The painter's later manner is seen in the painting "Ennui" (No. 3,846), the very picture of boredom, though on rather too large a scale for the display of his quality. That is beautifully seen in the still-life, "Roquefort" (No. 3,847), a picture composed of common things: cheese under a glass cover, a bottle, a wineglass, and a knife. There is the beauty of truth in the tones and the refined delicate colour. One, not a painter, might be surprised that there should be such lovely colour in such common objects.

The work of Professor Tonks is, in a sense, complementary to that of Wilson Steer. He represents the best academic art. Not Royal Academic, which is another matter. His work is perfectly trained, just as he himself is a perfect teacher. Really beautiful in drawing, with feeling and sometimes an almost fierce integrity, he is best in his pastel work; in such things as "The Toilet" (No. 3,016) and the sketch portraits of Auguste Rodin (No. 3,017) and Madame Rodin (No. 3,018). The medium is peculiarly sympathetic to him. His simpler paintings of single figures are better than those built-up subject pictures with many figures which are faultlessly constructed from the academic point of view, but in the making of which emotional expression has somehow got lost. "Rosamund and the Purple Jar" (No. 3,717) is a good example of his academic work, but it gives one the feeling of having been carefully made rather than inspired.

Many of the younger painters are indebted to him for the soundest of training—although many of them have gone astray and fallen into the maelstrom of ultra-modernism.

The influence of French Impressionism was definitely introduced into this country by Lucien Pissarro, who came to settle in England in 1891. He became a member of the New English Art Club soon after. The influence appears to be foreign to the English temperament, and has never been very extensive, but on certain painters, like Harold Gilman and Spencer Gore, who came into direct contact with Pissarro, it was very definite. Like Sickert, Pissarro has pursued the path of self-expression, completely uninfluenced by modern developments. He is a master of the method, and in the actual perception of colour values he is unrivalled.

He is an artist who has sought solely to satisfy his own conscience—no easy matter. His technique is personal, and applied strictly as a means to an end. In his work there is no compromise, no concessions



LES AMANDIERS—LE LAVANDOU : L. J.M.W. Turner.

made to fashion or to what others may call charm of paint. There is for him only one method by which he can arrive at the truth—truth of colour, light, and atmosphere. His taste is impeccable. For many years he printed exquisite books at his own press—the Eragny Press—designing the type and cutting the blocks which reproduced his designs in colour and gold. The latter have a beauty which recalls Persian and Chinese art. But his oil-paintings are entirely natural in conception, although those gifts of design and fine colour which distinguished his illustrations are fully expressed in them. His aim is the completest realization of truth to nature as he feels it, without the slightest reference to academic tenets or to any other painter's work.

Something of his subtle and sensitive perception of colour effect as a means of expressing light, colour, and atmosphere may be seen in his

picture of "Les Amandiers : Le Lavandou" (No. 3,865). The limpid clear light of Southern France has never been more truthfully painted, and the delicate fineness of the colour values in a subtle recession of planes is a masterly achievement. The palpitating sun-suffused air seems to be infinite; the furrows in the fields and the little straggling vineyards have awakened to new life, and the delicate ethereal blossoms of the almond trees are like a "phantom painted on the air."

His other painting, "High View : Fishpond" (No. 3,179), shows how uncompromising he can be in his search for truth. From the popular point of view the subject is prosaic and therefore uninteresting—all that is left to admire is the remarkable truth of the painting, and one must have an eye to perceive that. But Pissarro has never admitted any of the conventional notions in regard to subject, which for so long governed English painting: anything in nature that interested and moved a painter was a suitable theme for a picture.

The painters who were most definitely influenced by Pissarro were Gilman and Gore. The present writer would admit his great indebtedness to him, which may perhaps be seen in the picture of "Michaelmas Daisies" (No. 1,355). The work of Harold Gilman (1878-1919) was at first painted in the regular Slade School manner, with an added flavour of Whistler. It was smooth and negative in colour. Under the later influence a complete change was apparent. Real and vivid colour took the place of the familiar brown and black tones, and from painting the usual sort of subject Gilman turned to everyday life for his *motifs*, and many of them were of an unconventional character. His two pictures, "The Canal Bridge" (No. 3,684) and "Leeds Market" (No. 4,273), are good examples of his later work, though it is a pity the gallery possesses no example of his painting of interiors with figures and still-life—the sort of subject at which he excelled.

Spencer Gore (1878-1914) was a delightful artist, subtle and sensitive, with a very fine sense of colour. At first his landscapes, painted near his home in Hertfordshire, were purely lyrical songs of colour. His colour always had a spring-like quality, a newness and freshness, and he painted distant trees in the haze of an early summer, when the green melts into the blue, with charming feeling. Then there came a time when, in his work, both colour and pattern were more closely knit. His interests extended, and he began to paint, now more often in town than in country, street scenes, interiors, portraits, and theatre and music hall subjects. His colour, always personal, was now less Impressionist and more organized.

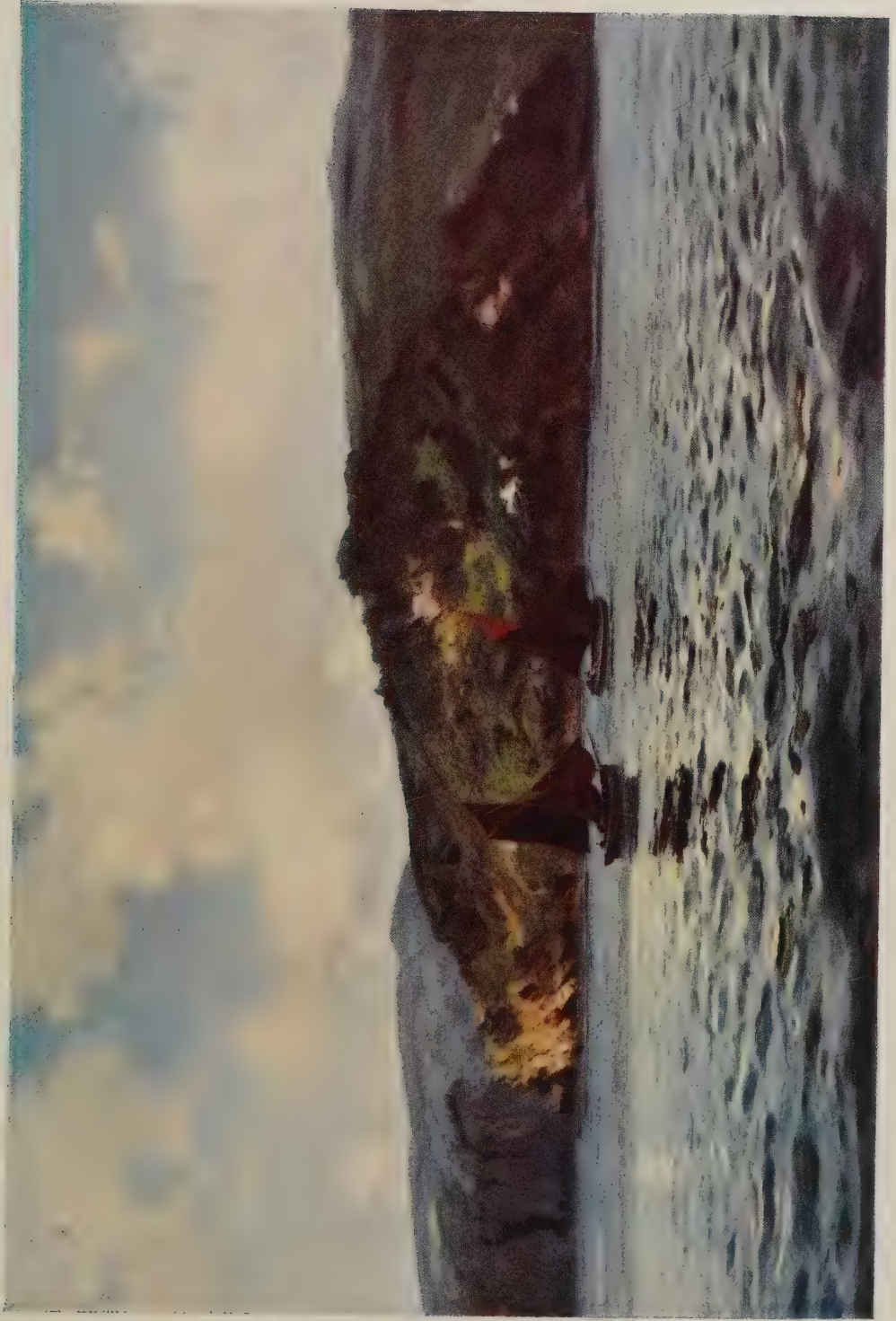


PLATE 18.—CATSPAWS OFF THE LAND: H. Moore.

He would prepare a painting by dividing the colour into warm and cold tones, red and blue tones. On that he would paint the half tones in all their gradations. In that way he obtained subtlety of divided tones, with all their vitality plus an underlying solidity and firmness. For he had Cézanne's feeling that Impressionist painting lacked solidity. The picture of "Houghton Place" (No. 3,839) is a fair example of that period. Then came a time of transition, when he began to simplify his tones of colour quite arbitrarily and to put them on the canvas in that angular manner sometimes wrongly called "Cubism."

Out of those experiments began to emerge a very interesting, solid, and subtle way of painting which recalled Cézanne, and yet was English and quite personal, when Gore died at the early age of thirty-six—a great loss to English art. The painting "From a Window in Cambrian Road" (No. 3,558) is a mere "lay-in," and although painted in 1913, the year before his death, is not at all characteristic of his later work.

It is convenient here to mention the work of Charles Ginner, not that he was an Impressionist in the special sense, but because he was associated intimately with Gore and Gilman. He and the latter initiated a movement which they called "Neo-realism." They undertook to paint things as they are, excluding the personality of the painter! an obviously impossible proposition, as their work clearly proves. Their pictures are full of personality and very easily identified. Ginner had originally received some training as an architect, which may account for his fondness for painting bricks, and for the substantial character of his painting generally and of houses in particular. His work has a style unlike any other. His "Porthleven" (No. 3,838), though a good one, is not the most typical example of his work.

Another gifted painter, who is essentially an Impressionist, is Ethel Walker. The influence in her case came, I believe, from Belgium rather than from Pissarro. She has a certain mystical trait in her artistic constellation which sometimes recalls not so much Indian art as Indian feeling and gives her work a peculiar distinction. This is seen in her lovely decoration "Nausicaa" (No. 3,885), which also reveals her beautiful sense of colour. She has the fault which, to some extent, can be felt in the painting of the French Impressionists, a lack of solidity and construction. There is this want of body in her "Portrait of Miss Buchanan" (No. 3,685), a delicate representation of youthful character.

The work of Professor Rothenstein has been considered under the portrait painters. The principle he applied to portraits is the basis of



NAUSICAA; Ethel Walker.

his landscape painting. He has had more influence as a teacher than as a painter. There are few students who, even if they possessed it, could carry through his artistic sincerity with such uncompromising thoroughness and scorn of the lesser attractions. His earlier picture, "The Doll's House" (No. 3,189), painted in 1899, has a romantic beauty and a delightful quality of paint which shows how much he sacrificed in his later pursuit of ultimate truth. Somewhat akin to Rothenstein is Francis Dodd, an artist of equal sincerity though less aggressive in style. He is, perhaps, more distinguished as an etcher and draughtsman than as a painter. His paintings are inclined to be hard and literal, and his colour limited. The latter characteristic limits the attractiveness of his "Smiling Woman" (No. 3,957). There is a picture by him in the Imperial War Museum representing a captured German soldier being interrogated by British officers which is an astonishing piece of realism and a remarkable study of character and expression.

These painters have had, unconsciously, much to do with the moulding of modern British art. They might with advantage "be a copy to these younger times" would these times accept such a copy or any copy. But these times are a time of lawlessness, without coherence or cohesion. The cry is *sauve qui peut*, and the way chosen is the path of destruction.

New English art means that variety of artistic experience which found more or less free expression between the year 1886 and the time when Post-Impressionism and Cézanne came to fascinate and lead astray those "younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses all but new things disdain."

Among the form of expression one could detect a tendency towards a careful, almost geometrical, planning of a work of art. It was practised, in one case perhaps unconsciously, by such distinguished painters as Walter Bayes, Sir D. Y. Cameron, and Sir C. J. Holmes. Their aim was not quite the same thing as "significant form" because their work does retain some significance, and significant form in painting is usually chaotic. But it originated in the feeling that a work of art should be economically and effectively presented, and that such a result could be attained by a carefully thought out arrangement of the picture. Sir Charles Holmes had committed himself to a brilliant work on "The Science and Art of Picture Making," and picture making is the term that best describes the work of these three painters. Now the aim of the artist should be the expression of his emotional reaction to his subject—to the aspect of nature or life which has moved him. All that constitutes "Picture Making" should have been previously mastered, so that the

painter should have so complete a grip on his technique that at the moment of realizing his expression his sense of such things as drawing and design operates instinctively as it were. Otherwise the fire of his emotional impulse has cooled during the intellectual process of planning and construction. And it is so with these painters. Emotion has been sacrificed to an ideal of constructional perfection. Walter Bayes is a successful planner. No fault can be found with his design ; it is well balanced ; everything is where it ought to be, and his colour is harmonious and more or less natural, if generalized. " The Ford " (No. 4,388), for instance, is an admirable example of design. But it is without feeling ; there is nothing to stir the emotions, no mystery, but a finite, well-constructed arrangement.

It is much the same thing with Sir D. Y. Cameron, who might almost be described as the victim of his own seriousness. That may be a fine quality in his etchings—he is an acknowledged master of the needle and the acid—but etching is so much more a thing of craft that what is a virtue in it may be a vice (lacking other things) in painting.

His pictures, " Ben Ledi " (No. 3,209) and " Stirling Castle " (No. 3,324), are like painted etchings, well designed, delicately drawn, but without emotional impulse. It is somewhat different with Sir Charles Holmes. He has a singularly acute brain, and is moved by a desire for perfection of statement. But one would forgive a little carelessness for the sake of a little impulsive warmth. He has learnt the lesson of his book too thoroughly to surrender himself to his emotional reactions, for such things may be a little too disturbing in their vehemence. So he has chosen that his pictures should be well constructed and perfectly planned ; line balances line and mass answers to mass. Frequently there is a description of dramatic effect but without the drama. His colour is harmonious and personal, but it is a mental conception, never a careless response to the glamour and beauty of nature. That he experiences an emotional reaction one feels somehow in his paintings, but there is a hiatus somewhere. There is not a complete union between his feeling and his expression. He is mastered by his intellect and by those qualities which made him so effective an administrator and so lucid and cogent a writer and disputant. But artists are rarely made of such stuff. They are irrational and illogical. The fire that burns them is the fire that must be expressed—not the logic of construction, not the laws of composition. Take " The Burning Kiln " (No. 3,041), it is an impressive subject ; but in the painting where is the impressiveness ? It is a carefully planned



PLATE 19.—THE GIRL AT THE GATE : Clausen.



THE DOLL'S HOUSE : Rothenstein.

composition ; the colour is restrained and thought out—not passionate, irresistible, powerful. And yet one feels that the painter experienced its impressiveness ; that it was, in fact, that quality that made him want to paint it. It is the same thing with “ Whernside ” (No. 4,381)—one can appreciate those qualities which make it a notable achievement. But where is the feeling of loneliness and grandeur which are the essence of such a subject ? Those forces of the intellect must be mastered if a work of art is to be produced. At such moments intuition is greater than intellect, and in the creation of works of art, as Keats has said, “ the dull brain perplexes and retards.”

There is another painter who also is consciously moved by an ideal of perfect utterance, but Henry Bishop retains, in spite of it, the warmth of the first emotional experience, and that despite a temperamental impatience with such experience. But he is an artist, and through his emotional responses his intellectual efforts make for a perfection which he would fain seek in other ways. Bishop was influenced by Whistler—they sought the same kind of perfection—but Bishop had an interest in vital things. His little picture, “ A Street in Carrara ” (No. 4,225), shows him seeking for perfection of placing—of arrangement—and economy of utterance, but through it all there is the original feeling which moved him, in the first place, to paint the subject.

Among the painters of this period were some who, although they were fundamentally Royal Academic, had some quality, not comprised within that category, which distinguished their work. Charles Sims (1873–1928) was always moved by a phantasy and a feeling for the symbolic, which his talent—and he had great facility—could not quite express. This may be seen in such pictures as “ The Fountain ” (No. 2,260) and “ The Wood Beyond the World ” (No. 2,933). The vision that the former gave him found inadequate expression and is represented by a number of nude women bathing in a fountain, painted very neatly and skilfully. The vision may have been mystical, but the expression remained earthly. The latter picture represents a number of naked babies, charmingly painted, in a landscape by a lake. The further significance for the painter must have been something he could not express in paint. But that he was haunted by visions, that somehow eluded him, is proved by his latest work, an example of which, “ I am the Abyss and I am the Light ” (No. 4,396), was presented to the Gallery. Here is allegory and symbolism that symbolizes nothing but chaos. Such things are not within the province of the art of painting. It may mean what you will, but

expression, the purpose of art, must express something definite or it is a failure.

One feels that it may have been this tragic inability to realize his dreams that caused the untimely death of Charles Sims.

There are many other painters of distinguished talent that might—that perhaps ought—to be mentioned. Men of great technical gifts like Alfred Munnings, whose work needs no explanation, or of tender if melancholy feeling, like David Muirhead. And one cannot help speculating on the development of Muirhead Bone—the fine draughtsman and etcher—if he had remained a painter.

His picture of the “ Botanical Gardens, Glasgow ” (No. 3,166), painted before 1902, is a fine painting, broadly and vigorously handled. It is beautiful in colour, and a true expression of atmospheric effect. It has some relationship to the Impressionists, though the method is different.

New English art achieved certain definite things : the beauty of real life in its own conditions and the interest given to art by genuine personal impressions. To walk through Gallery I., which contains the work of the eighteenth century, is to be conscious of the monotony of the depressing brown conventional colour which governed the art of that time. But the impression made by Gallery XXI., where most of the New English pictures are hung, is vastly different. Here is living, vital colour, light and atmosphere, and a delight in the beauty of common things. That comparison, more than anything, emphasizes the progress and the gain, æsthetic and human, that has been achieved by modern art.

XIV

THE MODERN SPIRIT

NOTWITHSTANDING the lavish applause of certain of the critics it is not yet possible to estimate the value of whatever good there may be in the confusion of modern art as practised by the younger painters of the present day. The tangle has to be unravelled before genuine expression can be separated from mere imitation. Or at present one may say that art is in the melting-pot, and it is too soon to tell what is gold and what is dross.

The Post-Impressionist exhibition (Manet and the Post-Impressionists at the Grafton Galleries), organized by Roger Fry in 1910, marked the beginning of an epoch in modern art in England. It had taken some forty years for French Impressionism to reach Bond Street, and for some unknown reason it has had very little influence on English painting. Possibly it was not startling enough nor new enough when it reached England to prove very exciting to the younger generation. Its battle had been fought entirely in Paris, and even the shouting was over by the time the movement was really felt here. But things move much more rapidly in these days. A new "ism" is hardly invented and launched in Paris before there are signs of its infection having spread among the newest painters of the Slade School and the London Group.

After the exhibition of 1910 there was not exactly a stampede—a rush for the newly discovered goldfields: the movement was much more gradual; but it has spread with increasing velocity far and wide among the more youthful members of the "body artistic." Mr. Roger Fry, the eager, intellectual leader of the revolt, aided and abetted by Mr. Clive Bell, aroused the enthusiasm of his followers, and a small group (since developed into the Bloomsbury Group) was soon immersed in the deep if unknown waters of "Post-Impressionism," which could cover, amongst other things, a multitude of artistic sins. Then followed a period during which these young painters, after their "wild surmise," consulted one another anxiously about their "reactions." Other



PLATE 20.—CARNATION, LILY, LILY, ROSE: Sargent.

"younger spirits . . . whose judgments are mere fathers of their garments ; whose constancies expire before their fashions," ever ready to find virtue in the new, were eager to experiment with the unfamiliar methods thus freshly revealed.

Not for them the mantle of Elijah ; they preferred the breeches of Cézanne, and Cézanne became the first object of their adoration.

There was no time to waste on understanding, but there were obvious peculiarities and mannerisms in the master's work, and these could be copied. Cézanne sometimes used a blue outline to correct his drawing or to recover it where it had been lost, so the blue outline appeared in English art.

Its reign was comparatively brief. A certain angularity of construction which Cézanne sometimes used with the object of securing that solidity and enduring quality which he felt the work of the Impressionists lacked, next attracted attention, and this discovery was confirmed by the advent of Picasso's "Cubism." And this peculiarity was admired just as the essence of El Greco's art had been supposed to reside, not in the intensity of his power of expression of an inward vision, but in his peculiar distortion and exaggeration.

For a time Cubism and Post-Impressionism were confused, and a significance was found in the two terms which was far from the obvious meaning of those words.

Gauguin's work had a little influence, but Van Gogh's none at all. That was because there was nothing new about the latter. Vincent had intenser feeling and deeper insight than other artists, but he invented no new method, and it was the method, not the feeling, that interested the young painters.

Certain artists like Spencer Gore and R. P. Bevan experimented with Cézanne's methods with beneficial results ; others, like Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Keith Baynes, explored the rhythmical side of his art, but few seemed to realize that Cézanne's work is based on an exquisitely subtle appreciation of colour values. The work of most of the Cézannists is negative, muddy, and brown in colour, and quite unlike the pure tones of their master.

They discarded the clear, lovely palette of the Impressionists from which Cézanne's work had developed. It was another instance of the followers of an original artist making a school out of his mannerisms without realizing that a particular technique or method is suitable only for the expression of a particular intuition, and if the intuition is wanting,

there is no use for the method. The adoption of an alien mode of expression in art is like wearing another man's suit ; one may hope it will fit somewhere, and in time, no doubt, distorted and bagged, it will adapt itself to the wearer, though perhaps with little resemblance to the original shape.

Cézanne's art was exceedingly simple ; he merely tried to express his perception of nature in his own way. It contained no secret that an imitator might discover and use for his own purposes. He provided no panacea for the ills of painters. Certain critics have tried to explain his art by a scientific test, but nothing could be remoter from art in general or from Cézanne in particular. New methods have a value for their followers only when such methods are able to increase or to liberate their power of expression. But it is always better to be sincere than merely new.

Italian Futurism, which made a brief appearance in London at the Sackville Gallery in 1912, had perceptible influence on only one painter, C. R. W. Nevinson, who found something sympathetic in it. Even with him it was but a passing phase, and there is no impress of its passing in either of his two pictures, " La Mitrailleuse " (No. 3,177) or " A Studio in Montparnasse " (No. 4,231). The former is an exercise in angular construction—a method suitable to its subject ; the latter is a painting in this artist's strong, almost harsh, realistic style. But a later influence has infected much of the work of the younger painters of the present day, and that is the influence of the *douanier* Rousseau.

It is only within recent years that the naïve, amusing, and interesting work of the *douanier* has become popular in London and sought after by collectors at high price. In Rousseau's case the work was a genuine expression, not unlike a child's, of what he had seen in nature or had imagined. It was the best he could do, and was produced for his own satisfaction, with no idea of publicity. But the deliberate cultivation of self-conscious *naïveté* is obviously absurd. The drawings of children, in which one finds a simple, innocent expression, often strikingly original and humorous, of things seen but unknown, have a real charm. But the productions of art students who are fully equipped and trained—so far as an art school can equip them—in which childishness is cultivated and drawing is deliberately distorted, are neither amusing nor praiseworthy.

In many cases the painters are technically extremely skilful. Their works have not even the casual interest which may accidentally belong to the work of the genuinely incompetent. These painters are encouraged

by certain collectors, societies, and by other connoisseurs of inefficiency. They win a passing recognition which would probably not be awarded to their serious work, or would not be awarded without being earned.

Of the modern painters represented in the Gallery who have been influenced by Cézanne one of the best is Bernard Meninsky. His powers were undoubtedly developed by a study of the French master. He has not, so far as I know, definitely imitated him; nor does he approach nature in the same way or from the same point of view as Cézanne. His method is less analytical and less laborious, but his work has gained in solidity and rhythm of expression. It is as though the French painter had indicated a path and shown him certain things worth cultivation, but the roots of the matter were already in his own nature. Meninsky's "Portrait of a Boy" (No. 4,118) has distinction, because it is a sincere and sympathetic attempt to express his singularly acute perception of character. It is a complete portrait, and realized with truth and not convention. The colour being negative, though harmonious, is its weakest point, but Meninsky's power of analysis is directed rather towards human personality than towards visional effect.

An interesting instance of the change wrought in an artist's work by the influence of Cézanne may be found in the paintings of Duncan Grant, an unusually sensitive artist. The "Lemon Gatherers" (No. 3,666) is a rhythmical composition in a sort of personal classical manner. It is a decoration, and rather lovely in colour. After his surrender to the influence of Cézanne, Grant's work apparently changed completely, not only in method, but in point of view, and his colour sense became entirely different. The refined, cool tones of his earlier work gave place to a fondness for sticky browns, yellow-browns, and a nondescript olive green that was neither green nor brown, which were certainly not derived from Cézanne. And his interests were absorbed by a different class of subject. Possibly he gained more power; certainly the change was complete. What was more puzzling was that his personality appeared to have altered no less than his style.

His painting, "The Queen of Sheba" (No. 3,169), is an experiment in a manner unlike that of his painting before or since. It is painted in spots which seem to have no significance except as spots, and there is no virtue in a peculiar method save as a means to an end.

The impact of these various and hitherto unknown styles, brought over from France, had some curious reactions. Attempts at emulation stirred many painters to invention, and in more than one case it would not be

unfair to say that ingenuity has been regarded as a sufficient substitute for art. Some of the influences were particularly dangerous. Cubism, originally a *jeu d'esprit* of Picasso's, was taken so seriously by dealers, collectors, and critics, who were determined not to be caught napping, that it became established as a new discovery in artistic expression. Finally, it died of repetition, as even the best jokes will, despite the persistent effort of the most skilful artistic surgeons of the *Rue de la Boétie*. It had practically no influence in England, unless the angular drawing and painting of that able painter, William Roberts, can be said to be its illegitimate offspring. The curious convention favoured by this painter may be seen in "The Char" (No. 4,148). The adoption of so arbitrary a method places a limit to the painter's power of expression. It is neither natural nor plastic; its use means too great a sacrifice.

The style of Matisse is not a good one to imitate, because it is a wholly personal form of expression, the result of long artistic experience. To discard the inessential in order to reduce painting to a crystalline form is possible only to an artist of similar experience, and then probably it is the true expression of only one artist—Matisse himself. When a young painter tries to imitate Matisse's results, superficiality is the sole product. If one were allowed to guess, one would say that the ingenious character of Paul Nash's work was the outcome of his awareness of Cézanne and Matisse—the Cézanne of the water-colour, not of the oils. And there is a similarity between the work of these two Frenchmen—not a physical resemblance in the results, but a similarity of intention. But however "queer" a work may be, it must convey the impression that that effect is the final result of an emotional impulse achieved with all the maturity of experienced skill; otherwise it is only too easy to be queer.

Queerness is certainly the first characteristic which strikes the observer in Stanley Spencer's large painting of "The Resurrection" (No. 4,239)—it is eighteen feet long—but the observer, it has been noted, is invariably impressed. He is also puzzled, and one is sometimes tempted to ask whether a painter who has something definite to say should be so obscure in the saying of it.

The picture is impressive in more ways than one: it has genuine artistic qualities; possibly its literary interest may be its chief and only weakness; indeed, one may be tempted to wonder whether the first starting-point—the original impulse—was literary or not, or if the story, whatever it be, did not grow out of it—was not merely an afterthought. If the explanation be that it is "an allegory of the saving of the black and



PLATE 21.—DIANA OF THE UPLANDS: Furse.



CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS: Spencer.

the white races—the instinctive and the intellectual,” it is a remarkably vague explanation.

How and from what are they being saved? The only indication of saving is the unimportant detail of an overcrowded boat on a stretch of water in the background, and one has the feeling that they would be much safer in the churchyard.

Actually the scene represents the graveyard of a country church; the tombs have been opened and reveal a number of bodies, some draped, some otherwise, many of whom appear to be coming most reluctantly to life; the figure of Christ is seated on a stone throne, with God the Father behind, and a number of saints and other holy personages are drawn up by the church regarding the spectacle. There are passages of beautiful painting in the picture, and the whole thing, despite its restlessness, is based on a big design which gives it that decorative quality of which one is undoubtedly aware when approaching the picture. It is a big imaginative effort. The only pity is that there should be any obscurity about its literary meaning. That is not the kind of mystery that adds value to a work of art. Spencer has a penchant, or even a passion, for presenting scenes from Biblical history in a present-day setting. He has given his picture of “Christ bearing the Cross” (No. 4,117) an effect of supernatural light which is strangely impressive. The curtains are blown out from the windows with an effect of wings, and the whole scene has an unearthly aspect.

One of the most striking tendencies of modern art is in the direction of uncompromising realism—a brutal frankness which excuses nothing and hides nothing. This is not, of course, a new thing in the history of art, but it has not been done before in English art quite so fully or so deliberately, nor, indeed, with the same convincing truth. We have referred to the works of Charles Ginner, who seeks to present natural scenes without comment and without the intervention of the artist’s personality. Mark Gertler has made no such avowal, but his work pursues the same end of strong character and unmitigated realism.

His picture, “Portrait of a Girl” (No. 3,807), is an early work of 1912, and by no means characteristic of his later and more usual style.

It is an obvious practice to divide pictures into works of art and descriptive pictures, but in regarding some contemporary painting it seems necessary to add a third class to include pictures which are merely catalogues.

This may be an outcome of the desire to be purely objective. There

is at least one painting in the Gallery, acquired within the last few years, which is scarcely more than a catalogue. It tells you there were certain things in the landscape, but hardly anything more about them.

The influence of Cézanne undoubtedly imparted solidity to the work of modern painters, and that is a desirable quality. The picture of "Flowers in a Jug" (No. 3,836), by Vanessa Bell, both loses and gains by it. The jug is an admirably real painting of such an object, but the flowers, which are meant to be chrysanthemums, are so solid that they look more like the sort of mops which are used in sculleries for washing up. The qualities of a painting from nature must be found in nature, and not imparted to it by an intellectual preoccupation with a certain style.

The new in art is not necessarily good in itself, but it has an enlivening and stimulating effect. To quote Henry James, "Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchanges of views and the comparison of standpoints; and there is a presumption that those times when no one has anything particular to say about it, and has no reason to give for practice or preference, though they may be times of honour, are not times of development—are times, possibly even, a little of dullness."

Out of the ebullition which is the present state of modern art something may emerge that possesses some fundamental truth or some lasting beauty. Activity and growth are better than stagnation and finality. A mistaken tradition had laid too heavy a weight on art, and it is not unfair "to suggest that certain traditions on the subject applied *à priori* have already had much to answer for, and the good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be perfectly free."

The new influences, which appear to be so revolutionary, have stimulated to life and encouraged the desire for freedom of expression. Therefore the younger artists should receive encouragement, always subject to sincerity (where it can be perceived), but the praise lavished by certain indiscriminating critics on the younger generation is more harmful than good.

XV

SCULPTURE

THE literary spirit, unfavourable as it may be to painting, is definitely disastrous when applied to sculpture.

Yet it has always been the chief inspiration of British sculpture, and even to-day, although it is no longer the basis of that particular branch of art, it tinges nearly all the work that is being done.

The development of sculpture in England has been remarkably slow. Modern ideas have not received the enthusiastic welcome from sculptors that they have from painters, and if it cannot be said that there is any increase in skill, there has been some improvement in taste.

The English have very little feeling for abstract qualities in a work of art or as a means of artistic expression. As the chief motive is literary, they strongly insist on a recognizable likeness to a thing in any work of art—they indeed rate that quality above any other. Witness the discussion of the memorial to Lord Haig, which made it quite clear that what was wanted was a true likeness ; whether or not it was a work of art was clearly a matter of less importance. Yet a fine work of art would in the long run be a greater memorial, since posterity, although it might at the same time set up unworthy gods, would continue to look at a work of art when it would shun a bad work that was merely a good likeness. Who, to-day, looks with anything but indifference at the majority of the memorials which disfigure the streets and squares of London ?

Just as in painting there are comparatively few painters who feel things primarily through the medium of colour, so there are still fewer sculptors to whom form—mass and line—is the quintessence of their conception. We see them imitating the model before them with great skill and fidelity, but they are not moved primarily by the plastic spirit—a passion for the relation of mass, form, bulk, which arouses an emotion that compels expression. The names given to their figures or groups—Echo, Psyche, Eve, Spring, etc.—are mere labels or titles for exhibition



PLATE 22.—THE MIRROR : Orpen.

purposes. Sculpture is incapable of realizing that kind of abstraction, and the ideas being purely literary are not essential to any plastic inspiration.

The authentic sculptural conception may be found in England in such artists as Epstein and Dobson; but it is rare—much rarer than it is in France and other foreign countries.

The basis of the English sculpture of the early nineteenth century was founded on a misunderstanding of Greek idealism. It was considered the height of culture and refinement for sculptors to seek subjects in Greek mythology for expression, preferably in white marble. But where the Greeks were seeking perfection of form, the English sculptors found only sweetness and insipidity. A striking example of this is to be found in the work of John Gibson (1790–1866), the earliest sculptor represented in the Gallery, and a man of reputation in his day. His marble group representing “Hylas and the Water Nymphs” (No. 1,746) is meant to be Greek in feeling; actually it is a work of weak naturalism from which all character has been carefully smoothed out. It is extremely skilful—quite as skilful as, if not more than, anything that is done in the present day. It does not stimulate interest, imagination, or recognition. He has aimed at the sublime, and achieved only the ridiculous, for his “Water Nymphs” with their carefully coiffured heads—*à la Grecque*—are absurd. It is another example of the pernicious influence of the classical, the result of a visit to Rome. Its only virtue is that it is an accomplished piece of craftsmanship with an almost mechanical perfection. It was carved in Rome in 1826 for a Mr. Hyland, from whom it passed to the Vernon collection, and thence to the nation. Gibson would have been a better sculptor but for his preoccupation with Greek art.

Although Henry Weekes (1807–77) did not go to Rome, he was, none the less, a victim of the same influence. In those days it was difficult to be anything else; an Epstein would not only have had his work disfigured, he, personally, would have been tarred and feathered.

Roman bust portraits, a much debased imitation of the Greek, were coarse enough and dull enough in their clumsy mixture of realism and idealism, but the Victorian imitation of the Roman, such as one sees in Weekes's busts of Stothard (No. 2,075) and Mulready (No. 2,076) was intolerable. It is with surprise that one turns to his statue of John Flaxman (No. 1,769), for there is something monumental about this, in spite of its cheap realistic details. He was inspired by the subject, and for a moment found in nature something greater than an echo of the

past. It was as though a *man* could stir even a sycophant out of his self-complacency.

J. H. Foley (1818-74) had a talent which was above the average. His statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds (No. 1,770) is one of his best works. He knew not Epstein, and only a genius at that time would have dared to attempt anything different from the accepted conventions. And there were no geniuses among the sculptors of that time—not even Flaxman.

Victorian sculpture reached its lowest level with Armstead (1828-1905). The two examples of his work, "Remorse" (No. 1,929) and "Hero and Leander" (No. 2,054), are not only bad in craftsmanship, they are ridiculous in conception. "Remorse" was a Chantrey purchase of 1903. It was not without reason that he was chosen to work for the Albert Memorial. Armstead was a cultivated man, but that did not prevent him from producing work in the worst possible taste. The truth is that culture has nothing to do with art. Turner, a barber's son, was a great artist, so was Renoir, the son of a tailor. Van Gogh, the most moving artist of our time, had "sma' Latin and no Greek." Life and the quality of life inspires an artist, and one painting of genius is worth all the culture in the world.

One always associates Leighton with a later period. Actually he was born only two years after Armstead and died nine years earlier. His work is perhaps not quite so bad technically as Armstead's, but it is equally dead and uninspired. "An Athlete struggling with a Python" (No. 1,754) was bought out of the Chantrey Fund in 1877. Verily the whirligig of time brings in its revenge, and what was considered one of the finest works of art procurable by the President and Council of the Royal Academy fifty years ago is now regarded only with boredom.

It is not only the evil that men do that lives after them—their misguided well-meaning also endures, and sometimes with as disastrous an effect. And so it is with the Chantrey Bequest.

Leighton seems to have been absorbed in anatomy, but the bunches of muscles in his figures are neither realistic nor resolved into any artistic expression.

There are no definite breaks or well-marked limits in the development of English sculpture. One period merges into another without any upheaval and without any marked change until quite modern times. And so we see the pernicious example of Gibson's "Hylas and the Water Nymphs" and the deplorable marble relief of "Thetis and her Nymphs" (No. 1,763) by Thomas Banks (1735-1805) repeated, more

or less, in H. A. Pegram's "Ignis Fatuus" (No. 1,756) and "Sibylla Fatidica" (No. 1,945). These works are frankly a surrender to literary ideas; they are modelled with more freedom and with some realism, but the thought behind them is similar to that which misguided Gibson.

As there was no definite break in sculpture, so there was no transition period, unless the transition period is occurring at the present day. There was a gradual improvement both in conception and in style. W. Calder Marshall (1813-94), although a contemporary, was an improvement on Armstead. His "Prodigal Son" (No. 1,748) was a definitely better piece of sculpture, although it was sentimental and lacked originality. But with W. R. Colton (1867-1921) we come to something better. It was not that his work showed better skill, but it marked a loosening of the conventional shackles and a growing interest in real life.

Both his "Girdle" (No. 1,766) and "The Springtide of Life" (No. 1,928) show not only an authentic feeling, but a feeling aroused by the contemplation of life itself. The latter is a charming work, although its treatment is purely academic and lacks originality. Sir Thomas Brock (1847-1922), although he was essentially academic, showed remarkable vigour and a sense of material beyond the ordinary. He would have been a greater sculptor if he had lived a little later and been subject to modern feeling and development. His bronze group, "A Moment of Peril" (No. 1,747), showed an interest in movement which was something new in sculpture in 1880—the date of that work. But his methods were familiar and uninteresting. He had a sense of grace as well as vigour, as his figure of "Eve" (No. 1,784) shows. Many other sculptors of equal ability might be named without indicating any departure from the academic commonplace.

Onslow Ford, Hartwell, Mackennal, were all sculptors of skill and accomplishment, but they remain within the same class and have no essential originality. It is not until one gets to such artists as Havard Thomas (1854-1921), Harry Bates (1850-99), and Derwent Wood (1872-1926), that one finds any departure from what one might call the "Royal Academic" to distinguish it from the true academic. The latter represents the classical influence; the former the kind of subject and method taught and fostered by the Royal Academy.

Édouard Lanteri (1848-1912), although he taught sculpture at South Kensington, achieved something more than "school" in his work. This was probably due to his French origin; for he was born at Auxerre, and studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before coming to England

with Dalou at the time of the war of 1870. He was a realist with a French interest in character. His training had been academic, but he expressed a certain amount of direct personal feeling in such heads as "Paysan" (No. 1,905) and "The Sacristan" (No. 3,219), which were sincere if not particularly original.

Classical influence is seen at its best, and to a degree unusual in English sculpture, in the work of James Havard Thomas. It is that, combined with taste, technical skill, and an absorption in the methods of the past, that gives distinction to his work. He showed no trace of modern feeling, no attempt at vitality or emotion, but a still, classical perfection not without character. He worked for many years in the south of Italy, and that circumstance confirmed and amplified his original bent.

But if his work has weight, solidity, and simplicity, its lack of vitality endows it with an unattractive coldness. There is no passion in this careful craftsmanship. It seems as though made according to rule. The "Lycidas" (No. 2,763) may be admired for its workmanship. The fine surface of the bronze version was obtained in the Greek fashion by laborious chasing with files and by inlaying any imperfections in the metal. If it receives the admiration due to it, it arouses no warmer feeling. That unnaturally tense figure is neither dramatic nor pathetic. It has not the quality of life, and consequently makes no human appeal.

The same thing may be said of Thomas's other statue, "Thyrsis" (No. 4,202), which is an interesting example of his work in wax—a material that had a rare attraction for him. A comparison of these statues with the "Âge d'Airain" of Rodin would reveal the weakness of Thomas's work.

There is certainly more vitality and more relation to life expressed in the work of F. Derwent Wood, as may be seen by a comparison of his "Psyche" (No. 3,451) with the two works by Havard Thomas which are placed near it. The title of his statue is absurd actually; it is a life-like representation of a pretty and graceful model with a rather deformed body. There is nothing of the Greek about it, either in treatment or feeling. Derwent Wood's sculpture, although it does not differ essentially from the sculpture of the Royal Academy, was superior to it, because it is much more personal in its expression and has more vigour in its execution. He was a link between the dominating convention, from which he had not quite broken away, and the modern feeling as expressed in the work of Epstein.

There was abundant vigour—to go back a little—in the work of Harry Bates. Vitality was united with classical tradition in his work.



PLATE 23.—MADAME SUGGIA : John.

This was no doubt due to the fact that his strong natural individuality was developed and modified by his training under Dalou at Lambeth School and Rodin in Paris. His "Pandora" (No. 1,750) and his sketch "War" (No. 1,783) represent his classical side, but the former, with its careful beauty of handling and its combination of marble, ivory, and bronze is rather an example of craftsmanship than of pure sculpture. And both these works have a literary significance. Whereas "Hounds in Leash" (No. 1,767) is an appropriate subject for sculpture. It owes something to Rodin's earlier work, but its strength and vitality are characteristic of Bates. Through his training he was emancipated from the dull conventions which limit English sculpture. Its direct vigour of handling makes it an outstanding work among a collection of the more academic sculpture. It is, in any case, a personal expression wrought in the most appropriate manner—the manner dictated by the necessities of the subject and not imposed by the training of a school—and that gives it an interest which still endures.

From these works one passes naturally to modern sculpture, in which one finds a variety of interest and a variety of styles, since the modern mind is concerned mainly with personal expression. Without that quality a work of art cannot hope to survive, though with it there may be as much weakness as strength.

The most dominating figure in modern sculpture is undoubtedly Jacob Epstein.

In spite of official opposition Epstein has already made a great reputation which his many detractors cannot belittle.

Born in New York of Russian Jewish parents, he had no advantages. He was first a pupil of Barnard, the greatest American sculptor, but most of his training was obtained in Paris, though his natural genius, which showed itself early, received opportunity rather than direction in the *École des Beaux-Arts* and the *Académie Julian*. One of his first works in London was the decoration with carved stone figures on the façade of the British Medical Association building. These provoked the liveliest criticism and that vitriolic opposition which any original work of art arouses at any time on its first appearance. Now they are forgotten, and Epstein's later works—his "Rima" and his groups of "Night" and "Day"—have been attacked with even greater bitterness. It is strange now to recall that the citizens of Florence threw stones at Michelangelo's statue of David. And it is probable that posterity will marvel at the continued existence of those dreadful statues in Parliament Square,

the monument to Nurse Cavell and certain other statues which disfigure the streets of London, and will find it incredible that Epstein's monuments, which at least are interesting works of art, should ever have aroused opposition.

"O ignorant world that brutishly denies
Free speech to the exquisitely wise."

An artist moved by intensity of feeling cannot be content with exact imitation of nature ; that is too tame and ineffective. Unconsciously or deliberately he exaggerates those qualities which have specially interested him. This is probably truer of sculpture than of painting, for the former lacks the life-giving quality of colour, and has to depend on an intenser use of the means at its disposal. Epstein's work has increased in exaggeration as it has developed. One may realize this by a comparison of three works in the Gallery which are of different periods. The "Head of a Girl" (No. 3,187) is charming in feeling, definite in character, but rather fluently modelled, and without those emphatic touches which impart that feeling of extra vitality which is so arresting and attractive. "Nan" (No. 3,646), which is some five or six years later, marks a definite advance. It is more emphatic both in design and treatment. But in the bust of "Kramer" (No. 3,849) there is exaggerated emphasis in its powerful expression. It is not a life-like presentation. It is a realization of something stronger than life—an exultation, a sort of rejoicing in character and strength. There is possibly in too forceful expression a danger of losing subtle perception of character. But in this case the treatment is appropriate to the subject, as it was in Epstein's busts of Joseph Conrad and Lord Fisher. There is delicate and subtle perception in the "Bust of Mrs. Godfrey Phillips" (No. 4,418) and a spice of malicious humour.

For a time Frank Dobson, another gifted sculptor, experimented with simplification of forms which led almost to abstraction. It is a practice which is too intellectual for the production of genuine works of art. It may be interesting in the ingenuity it reveals, but in such a case the artist is starting from the wrong point and moving in the wrong direction. The simplification in the "Head of a Girl" (No. 4,437) is authentic expression of an emotional impulse.

An almost archaic spirit, modified in some subtle way by modern feeling, animates the work of Eric Gill. His favourite method is stone carving, at which he is an adept, but he is inclined rather towards decoration than realism.

During the last few years there has been a sort of revival in animal sculpture. The work of such men as Richard Garbe—"Drake" (No. 4,100)—recalls the old Chinese convention with its expressive simplicity, and his choice of material gives an added interest to his work.

A glance at the foreign sculpture in the Gallery gives some hint of its freedom and variety which are the rarer qualities in English work. There is undoubtedly a large body of academic sculptors in all European countries, but there are a great many independent sculptors, and there is much more vitality and importance in their work. There are already several schools represented in the Gallery—French, Serbian, Swedish, Belgian, and Russian. Among the first of these are examples of sculpture by two painters—Renoir and Degas—which are of particular interest. It is less rare in France than in England for an artist to practise both mediums. The difference between a painter's sculpture and that of an artist who is nothing but a sculptor is subtle and curious. Strangely enough much of Rodin's work resembles the sculpture of a painter. Rodin tried to express qualities which were considered outside the domain of sculpture, such as the suggestion of the effects of atmosphere and colour. So his work has some similarity with that of Degas and Renoir. The former of these modelled small figures of dancers and horses, but strictly for reference, for his use as a painter. They have great vitality and character, and, as they were meant merely as studies, a freedom from conventional treatment. One may feel in Renoir's work something of the artist's preoccupation with colour. He has not been concerned merely with the expression of form which so often seems to give that feeling of smoothness and lifelessness to the professional sculptor's work. Alphonse Legros also was a painter who practised sculpture, but his work in both mediums was inspired by classical feeling, and he had not the distinctively painter's point of view.

Among the more recent acquisitions are two bronzes by the Swedish sculptor Carl Milles. At his best his work is decorative and should be seen *in situ*, with architecture, or in the gardens and squares he has adorned in his own country. He has not that intimate conception which would make his work show to advantage in a Gallery or a drawing-room. Both his "Europa" (No. 4,247) and "Folke Filbyter" (No. 4,248) are parts of larger works, and their proper qualities are not seen when they are taken from their context.

The "Mongolian Head" (No. 4,419) by the gifted young Russian sculptor Dora Gordine, who works mostly in Paris, is an example of the

modern tendency towards simplification, but there is no loss of realism or expression in her search for crystalline presentation.

The faculty of monumental treatment is not a rare gift among English sculptors, as the various memorials erected in all the principal towns bear eloquent witness. Their conscientious pursuit of irrelevant realistic detail precludes the larger decorative treatment. But it is its monumental quality which distinguishes the large marble figure, "Premier Matin" (No. 3,031), by Rombaux, the Belgian sculptor. Although it is supposed to represent Eve waking from sleep after the Creation, the whole conception is purely plastic. The idea expressed by the title is a sop to popular demands or to the exigencies of exhibition catalogues; it is not to be supposed that such an idea was the motive of the sculptor's work.



PLATE 24.—OLD DECEMBER'S BARENESS EVERYWHERE: Buxton Knight.

XVI

THE CHANTREY BEQUEST

THE administration of the Chantrey Bequest has often been severely criticized, and if usually with justice, never with complete justice. For it has never been realized that the task of the President and Council is a perfectly impossible one. In any case the essential feature—the kernel—of the whole business has always been ignored. The Bequest was made for the purpose of acquiring “Works of Fine Art, of the highest merit, in sculpture and painting, that can be obtained, either already executed, or which may hereafter be executed, by artists of any nation, provided such artists shall have actually resided in Great Britain during the execution and completing of such works.” The point to be remembered—indeed, never to be forgotten or evaded—is that the works to be acquired must be of the highest merit. I imagine that few even of the most passionate admirers of the Royal Academy could look back on the record of Chantrey purchases and say that this consummation has often been attained. But the reason for this is perhaps not so apparent. It is practically impossible for any committee to decide what is a work of the highest merit. The tendency of all committees is towards mediocrity—towards, indeed, what is known as the happy medium which shall satisfy all, or at least a majority of members. No matter how brilliant individual members may be, when they are operating as units of a body they appear to become reduced to the average level. Individualities and individual tastes cancel out, as it were, and the result is invariably a compromise. An unusually forcible individual member who resists this tendency is merely a nuisance, and his opposition, moreover, has the effect of uniting the remaining members against him. It is the herd instinct, in little.

The Chantrey Committee is an exceptionally large one, consisting, as it must, of the President and Council of the Royal Academy. Its chances of selecting the works of the highest merit and agreeing on the selection are remote. The appointment of a small selecting committee

is an ineffectual expedient, since any committee is a compromise. The only way the end *might* be attained would be for the selection to be left to one man—a man of impeccable taste and knowledge. But there again is the rub. And the individual selection has to find favour in the eyes of the President and Council. So it must be admitted that the administrators of the Chantrey Bequest have before them what is virtually an impossible task. The goodwill recently manifested to defer to the recommendations of another committee is merely a blended compromise. It is only in flagrant cases, of which in the past there have been sufficient, that the committee should be blamed.

The psychology of committees is a fascinating study, but of no less interest is the repudiation by posterity of the fashion of a previous era. It is impossible to say that posterity (when the future shall become the present) in its turn has perfect taste or is incapable of making as many mistakes as its predecessors, yet one finds the present discarding what was false or bad or mediocre in the productions of the past until finally—at least, as far as art is concerned—only the few truly great are allowed to survive.

Even the committee of the present day—after so comparatively short a lapse of time—would not defend the Chantrey purchases of “Early Promise” and “Mother’s Darling,” two oil-paintings by Joseph Clark acquired respectively in 1877 and 1885. And there are more recent purchases which would share a similar repudiation. “Works of the highest merit!” Then the standard was very low in 1877 and 1885. But works already executed might have been purchased. And that suggests that other considerations have influenced the purchase of paintings in the past. But in any case, the record stands for ever as a monument, not to individual taste, but to the judgment and taste of successive committees. And one has an index to what in the past has appeared to the committee of the leading art institution of the country to be the “Works of Fine Art of the highest merit.” It is not an inspiring record, although it has its bright spots.

The first picture acquired under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest was a large and indefensible painting by William Hilton (1786–1839), called “Christ crowned with Thorns” (No. 1,629), which was bought in 1877. That was a bad Chantrey year. The purchases included, besides the Hilton and Clark’s “Early Promise,” Leighton’s “Athlete struggling with a Python,” and “Harmony” by Dicksee. The taste at that time was pretentious and pompous. But there were works already



THE PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST : Keene.

executed which might have been acquired. And in the Academy exhibition of that year there were Millais's "Yeoman of the Guard" and "The Sound of many Waters," Orchardson's "Queen of Swords," Watts's "The Dove," etc., and although these were not great works of art, they were of higher merit than the actual purchases.

The same exhibition also included two flower pieces by Fantin-Latour, exhibited under the name of "H. Fantin."

And it must be remembered that at that time pictures by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Wilson, Constable, and others were being sold for small sums. Works by Gainsborough were actually sold for prices ranging from 8 to 90 guineas, and a good Wilson or Constable could have been purchased for a quarter of the sum of £1,000 which the Chantrey Committee paid for "Amy Robsart," by Yeames, in 1877.

It is unfortunately impossible to let "bygones be bygones," because the director is faced with the problem of dealing with these pictures, a problem that becomes ever more pressing as the pictures increase and the space does not.

But perhaps, having admitted the problem and that nothing is being done to solve it, one should consider and be grateful for the few bright achievements rather than complain that a body of men has not been able to resist successfully the operation of the law of averages.

A really memorable achievement of the Chantrey Committee was the acquisition of thirteen cartoons and sixty drawings by Alfred Stevens, bought in 1922. These had been used for the decoration of the dining-room in Dorchester House, and they form a monument to a unique figure in the history of English art, and one who is generally admitted to be one of its greatest, though not most characteristic, creators. Dorchester House has disappeared, and its disappearance closes Alfred Stevens' worthy if unsuccessful effort to produce a work on the grand lines of the Italian Renaissance. All the Chantrey purchases could not be on the same level, but a certain number of them have, one hopes, a permanent value. "The Portrait of the Artist," by Charles Keene (an acquisition of 1922), has fine qualities such as one recognizes in paintings which have stood the test of time. That was a notable year, for it also saw the purchase of Wilson Steer's fine portrait of Mrs. Raynes, "Hammersmith Bridge," by Walter Greaves, "A Waterfall," by J. D. Innes, "Nan," by Epstein, and "Summer," by Philip Connard. But that year of grace has not been repeated, and there has been a decline since. "Claudio and Isabella," by Holman-Hunt, was a notable purchase in 1919, although



PLATE 25.—CAFÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DIEPPE : Sickert.

one would not like to assert that the altitude of its merit had not been exceeded by some other available work.

The terms of the Bequest were certainly broad enough. Under them the committee have power to purchase such works as Monet's "Westminster," or some of Camille Pissarro's paintings in Sydenham and Norwood, for it is definitely stated that work "by artists of any nation" may be acquired, although that seems to be in conflict with "the purpose of forming and establishing a public national collection of *British* fine art." But if the terms were broad, has not the interpretation of them been a little parochial?

At the same time as Chantrey, Robert Vernon had the thought of bequeathing his fortune for the benefit of artists; but after taking George Jones, R.A., the friend and biographer of Chantrey, into his confidence, he determined to give to the nation his collection of works by contemporary British artists. It comprised such a variety of painters as Sir William Allan, Edward Bird, Bonington, H. P. Briggs, Calcott, Clint, Collins, Constable, Cooke, Sidney Cooper, Creswick, Danby, Eastlake, Egg, Etty, Fraser, Gainsborough, Geddes, Good, Goodall, Haghe, Hart, Herbert, Herring, Hilton, Horsley, Howard, Johnston, Jones, Lance, Landseer, Lane, Lee, C. R. Leslie, Linnell, de Loutherbouurg, Maclise, Müller, Mulready, Nasmyth, Newton, T. Phillips, Pickersgill, Redgrave, Rippingille, Roberts, Romney, Samuel Scott, Shee, Simpson, Stanfield, Stothard, H. Thomson, Uwins, E. M. Ward, James Ward, Webster, Penry Williams, Witherington, Wyatt, and a few pieces of deplorable sculpture—a truly miscellaneous collection which included the works of only five first-rate artists.

Here we have a collection formed by one man in contrast to a collection formed by a committee, and it must be admitted the committee has the better of it. But Vernon (plus George Jones) was not the best judge of the highest merit in a work of fine art.

XVII

COROT AND THE IMPRESSIONISTS

PREVIOUS to 1926, when the King and Queen opened the new Galleries for Modern Foreign Art, the collection at the Tate Gallery had been limited to British art from Hogarth onwards.

Some of the French pictures in Sir Hugh Lane's fine collection had been shown there. The French section in the National Gallery was notably weak ; there were practically no examples of the Modern French School in any of the English public galleries. This serious deficiency was remedied through the generosity and good taste of Mr. Samuel Courtauld, who provided handsomely for the acquisition of modern French pictures. Sir Joseph Duveen, with his unfailing public spirit, came forward once again with his offer to build galleries to hold the pictures. A serious reproach to the National Collection was thus removed with inestimable benefit to students and lovers of art.

In a comparatively short space of time a notable number of pictures finely representing modern French art have been acquired.

The modern school in France may be said to date from Corot and Courbet, particularly from the former, for the modern tendency in painting made itself felt in landscape. There was at first a more definite and profounder change in the attitude of painters towards landscape than towards figure and portrait painting. That came somewhat later. In the classical period landscape painting was always regarded as of secondary importance, and it may be noted that landscape was not painted for its own sake, nor in a naturalistic way. It was governed by a conventional recipe which dictated, with variations, both the scale of colour and the style of composition. Atmosphere, as such, was ignored. An episode of figures, more or less prominent, was usually introduced as a justification or even as a sort of apology. But with the reaction initiated by Corot, and the beginning of the Romantic School, there was a decided change. It was not a return to nature, but a new and serious study of nature as expressed in landscape.

Corot himself belonged to a period of transition. His work was not entirely emancipated from the classical spirit. But he discovered that landscape was worth painting for its own sake, and he asserted the right of the artist to express his own vision and his personal reaction to natural effect without regard to any external standard imposed by authority. In this way he prepared the way for the French Impressionist School.

Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1796-1875) was born in Paris. Like many another painter, he began in a different walk of life, and was at first a linen-draper. He began to paint at the age of twenty-five, and first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1827. Two years before that date he made his first visit to Italy. The serene and lovely picture of the "Palace of the Popes, Avignon" (No. 3,237), shows him at the parting of the ways, as it were. He is still influenced by early classical ideas—as, indeed, he always was, to a greater or less degree. He lacks the *point d'appui* which would have been provided by the later discoveries in colour of the Impressionists. This picture, which is effective in its classical placidity, is admirably organized, but the colour is almost conventional in its restraint and simply arranged contrast. To emphasize this aspect of the matter, it should be compared with a landscape by Cézanne, with, for example, the beautiful Provençal landscape lent by Miss Davies.

But Corot went much further in the direction of colour analysis than the point he had attained when he painted the "Palace of the Popes." Although he never stumbled on the revelations which changed the art of Monet and Pissarro, he got near them, instinctively, in some of his later paintings: especially in the little picture of "Cows standing in a Marsh" (No. 2,630).

After Italy, he painted in Normandy and Fontainebleau, making Paris his headquarters. The little picture, "Bords de la Seine" (No. 4,181), painted before his second visit to Italy in 1834, gives a slight idea of his work at this period. It is somewhat monotonous in its unbroken greens, but shows a simple attempt to paint the scene before him.

Corot painted a certain number of figure pieces and nudes; most of these were done between 1835 and 1845. He even tried his hand at historical compositions, and late in life, in 1865, he decorated the Hôtel Demidoff. The "Peasant Woman" (No. 3,239) is a characteristic example of his small figure work. This, like the earlier landscapes, has a classical basis. It shows the influence of his contemporary, Ingres, but is infinitely warmer in feeling. In design and severity of drawing it approaches that cold and classical master, but the handling is personal,

and the colour is, more or less, the colour of nature and not the cold colour of the schools. It is a simple harmony of a few—about five—colours. It has the restraint and refinement of Corot's personality.

After a prolonged visit to Italy between 1835 and 1845, when he visited Venice, Florence, and Genoa, he settled at Ville d'Avray in 1854. And there most of his later work was painted. In the last period his work is characterized by a soft, vaporous atmosphere and silvery colour.

It was the pictures of this period that became so popular in Bond Street. Between the years 1855 and 1860 he painted several Bacchante subjects. "The Fisherman's Hut" (No. 2,631) and "Wood Gatherers" (No. 2,626) give a good idea of his later style. In the latter, painted about 1854, there is some hint of the method which subsequently became a formula. Corot had, to some extent, a natural style in the use of paint; he developed a later manner which went beyond this—a conventional treatment of composition and effect.

In his earlier work he surrendered to nature in his effort to express the beauty he perceived, but there is no such surrender in these pictures. In the picture of the "Wood Gatherers" one is conscious of a certain *parti pris*, as though he knew beforehand exactly what he meant to do. He was a master of mystery, one of the most attractive qualities in a work of art—Alfred Gilbert, the sculptor of Eros, once said it was the most important quality—and Corot exploited it in his later work. In this picture the dark and mysterious foreground of exquisitely drawn trees is very effective against the delicate, luminous sky, but it is hardly true to nature, and perhaps, in these days, a little obvious. "The Fisherman's Hut," rather earlier, is, in some ways, a more attractive picture. A study of the foreground is interesting for the light it throws on Corot's later technique. On a grey-green groundwork he has indicated details and variations of colour with the most delicate touches. But if he invented devices which made his work more attractive to collectors, *père* Corot, as he was affectionately called, had a real influence, and modern landscape dates from him. Although he painted many figures with distinction, he was essentially a lyrical landscape painter.

Gustave Courbet (1819-77), who shares with Corot and Delacroix the honour of being the chief influence on the younger painters of the time, was a man of very different character. His vanity and rebellious disposition spoilt the latter part of his career.

At the age of twenty he left Ornans, where he had been born, and entered Steuben's studio in Paris. His ambition was to be a stern



PLATE 26.—PAINSWICK BEACON : Steer.

realist ; that is to say, he wished to paint things as they are, excluding sentiment.

In this he was the complement of Corot, and it was in this direction that he influenced later painters. The ideal of realism, after the cold conventions of the classical idiom as practised by David and his friends, appeared attractive and salutary.

To-day, Courbet's work, despite its undoubted strength and solidity, seems a dull if emphatic statement of facts. He had abundant talent, but his taste was not impeccable ; its lapses are mainly in his landscapes. His work is unequal ; in his later life circumstances led him to the production of inferior pictures. But he had great talent and power, and his two most important pictures, the " Interment at Ornans " (in the Louvre) and " The Artist's Studio," are grand *tours de force*. In this collection he is represented by no outstanding example.

The small " Self Portrait " (No. 3,240) is similar to the one in the Louvre. It is very black, smoothly painted, strong but academic, and represents the painter at the age of twenty-five. The picture with the simple title of " Sea " (No. 2,767) is an example, though not a good one, of certain remarkable pictures he painted of similar subjects—sea and a stretch of sandy shore—in which the expression is dependent entirely upon the subtlety of values. His fondness for painting forest scenes with stags is illustrated by two pictures, " In the Forest " (No. 3,241), which has neither delicacy nor mystery, and " The Pool " (No. 3,243), which is strong, but common and unpleasant in quality.

There are certain painters who carry weight and influence with others more by their personality and ideas than by their actual productions. Such a man was Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix (1789–1863), the leader of the Romantic movement. His influence may be said to have been spiritual rather than artistic. He was a painter of enormous facility and talent. His lack of restraint had an irresistible appeal, after the circumspection of the Classic School. To-day his strictly painter-like gifts, his freedom and vivacity of handling, his inexhaustible power of invention, are somewhat overshadowed by the melodramatic nature of his subjects and, perhaps, by the lack of quietness in his conceptions. His lively and original ideas about art and life, which were noted in his famous *Journal*, had an enormous influence on his followers, and have been quoted even by twentieth-century innovators to justify some new movement. At the age of eighteen he was studying under Guérin ; six years later he appeared for the first time in the Salon, showing his picture of " Dante

and Virgil." A visit to Morocco in 1832 awakened his taste for Oriental and exotic subjects. The full extent of his powers is seen in his heroic battle pictures, paintings of dramatic subjects, and his vast ceiling and mural decorations.

He is not represented in the National Collection by any characteristic example of his work, for although he painted portraits with particular ability, they did not express his mind or his peculiar temperament. The "Abel Widmer" portrait (No. 3,287) formerly belonged to Degas, and was bought at his sale in 1918. The drawings are mostly sketches for pictures or studies for the decorations in the Palais Bourbon.

The effect of Corot's influence was immediately apparent on the painters of the Barbizon School—Daubigny, Diaz, Millet, etc.—but there was a very charming painter who, although not a pupil, was undoubtedly influenced by Corot. Eugène Louis Boudin (1824-98) was one of the first to benefit by the new practice of *plein air* painting. He had been apprenticed to a printer at Le Havre, but he had the good fortune to meet Millet and Troyon, who encouraged him to paint, and advised him to go to Paris. At one time he instructed Claude Monet in open-air painting.

There is a gaiety, freedom, and breeziness about Boudin's work that is in marked contrast to the coldness of conventional landscape painting.

He had an innate style, with a light and nervous touch. His pictures are full of air and natural effect, although there is often a slight touch of the illustrator in his work. Corot described him as "master of skies," which was high praise coming from such a grand past master. Boudin was not a pupil of Corot's, although he walked (one might say gambolled) in the new path that that master had opened up.

Antoine Chintreuil (1814-73) was considered to be Corot's most remarkable pupil, although he never approached the work of his master. His little grey landscape (No. 4,382) is sound but pedestrian, and shows the dullness of the matter when it is unilluminated by Corot's mind.

A contemporary of Corot, born twelve years later, was the remarkable painter—a strange and picturesque figure—Honoré Daumier (1808-79). Artistically, he owed nothing to the leader of the Barbizon School, and would be associated rather with Courbet and Delacroix. Actually, he was unique and independent. It would be difficult to say who were his artistic forbears. Something of the spirit of Goya lived on in him. But his solid and dramatic style were quite original. He was a satirist and a caricaturist, but with a sympathy—a sort of fierce sympathy—

with the poorer classes, a sympathy born of experience. He came from Marseilles, from which city his father, who was a glazier with poetic ambition, had removed to Paris when Honoré was fifteen years old. After a time as a junior clerk and as assistant in a book-shop, his father yielded to his son's entreaties and allowed him to study art. He soon began to earn money for illustrations, and in 1829 he first published a series of compositions.

He attracted the attention of Philipon, an ardent Republican, at the time of the Revolution of 1830, and Daumier was employed on his papers *Caricature* and *Charivari*. He was thus drawn for a living into political cartooning, and early in this new career he was imprisoned for six months.

Although he was longing to paint, abject poverty kept him a slave to caricature and illustration. The Revolution of 1848 dragged him again into the political arena. At that time he was living on the Île St. Louis, an artist's quarter, with Daubigny, Gautier, and Baudelaire as his neighbours.

The tragedy of his life lay in his ceaseless and unsuccessful struggle to escape from illustrative work to devote himself to painting, for which he was so peculiarly gifted. He was born with a sympathy for the down-trodden ; and he acquired a hatred for the Government and the love of his fellow-men early in his fight with poverty.

It is very rare for an intense love and understanding of his subject to be united in an artist with such a high degree of artistic utterance as they were in Daumier.

He had, by chance, become the mouthpiece of political revolution. He was not adverse from it, but it was not the stuff of artistic expression. That he found among the poor of Paris, whom he knew intimately. He was of them ; he lived among them. From his room in the Île St. Louis, an old and typical quarter of Paris, he watched the Blanchisseuses, whom he painted so often with such poignant feeling, at work on the banks of the Seine. All his best work was inspired by the lower classes of humanity, because they aroused his deepest feelings. His work is easily divided into series.

He found subjects in directions which were then as unusual as they were unexploited. The circus attracted him ; he painted and drew many scenes in the life of *Comédiens ambulants* ; then the law courts attracted him, and compositions of collectors and art dealers looking at prints ; but always it was humanity and human character in its various aspects that formed the basis of his art. One of the strangest of his diversions



DON QUIXOTE AND SANCHO PANZA : Daumier.



PLATE 27.—PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST : Tonks.

was the story of Don Quixote. Some of his best compositions, both in drawing and in painting, found their origin in scenes from that satirical classic. Perhaps he felt kinship with the mad Spanish knight. He, too, was pursuing a chimera and attaining so seldom the object of his quest. He was vast, many-sided, strong, and deep. His fight with poverty was unsuccessful, and ended only with death. Blindness darkened his last years. Then Corot of the silvery landscapes—the *père* Corot of delightful and unpretentious memory—came to his assistance and bought the house Daumier lived in, and presented it to him. "Only from you, Corot, could I accept such a gift," was Daumier's gesture of acceptance.

The unfinished painting of "Don Quixote and Sancho Panza" (No. 3,244), admirable as it is, cannot fully represent Daumier's genius. True, it reveals his masterly sense of design, which was always original and unconventional. Sir Michael Sadler's "Head of an Old Man" (No. 4,185), now the property of the Gallery, gives some hint of his appreciation of emotion. But one must study many of his works, both in painting and drawing—for he was a wonderfully sensitive draughtsman—to get some idea of the extent of his feeling for humanity and his understanding of character. In the people of the lower classes, from which he drew his models, he found the whole gamut of human expression, albeit suffering was the predominant characteristic. On those faces which he loved to draw, experience had left an eloquent imprint, such as no trace could be found on the placid, pleasant masks that adorned the annual Salons.

That was a time of great artistic activity. They were great figures—Corot, Courbet, Delacroix, and Daumier. There were others, the men of the Barbizon School, since famous—Daubigny, Diaz, Millet, Jacque, Rousseau. But there was no concerted movement. *Plein air* may have formed a school, but it was a school of sympathy and not of doctrine—simple, logical, inevitable. It scarcely involved a revolution. There was no great movement until Impressionism united such remarkable and such diverse artists as Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, and Pissarro. The time was ripe for further development. Corot had instituted a new practice. Artists went direct to nature for inspiration, and it had become generally recognized that the artist's purpose was the expression of his personal reaction to nature.

The heresy of the eighteenth century had become the established practice of the nineteenth.

Plein air could not be extended indefinitely without some key to an

intenser expression. Certain discoveries in regard to the simultaneous contrast of colours and the visual action of colours on one another, which Chevreuil had made, interested the painters. They experimented; discovered that light was made up of primary colours. They adapted the newly realized ideas to their paintings, and the movement, known as Impressionism, was born. The movement, probably the only truly original development in modern art, has revolutionized the whole of colour expression. The painters who adopted it with enthusiasm concentrated on the expression of exact effects in nature of colour, light, and atmosphere. Their work, as all new work in art has been, was received with scorn and derision. And possibly without the assistance of Durand-Ruel, an enlightened dealer, and the support of Théodore Duret, Duranty, Zola, and other critics, it might have been impossible for them to continue at all. Now their work is sought for all over the world. Pictures, unsaleable during the early years of the movement for 100 francs, now fetch several times as many thousands. A few pictures by Pissarro, left by his widow, sold in December 1928 for some £28,000. So are art and faith vindicated.

The leaders of the movement are now recognized as great masters. The title Impressionism was given them in scorn by a critic who wrote of their first exhibition at Nadar's Gallery in 1874. It derived from a painting by Monet, which he had called "Impression."

It is impossible to say who was the originator of the movement. Probably no one man. The artists were in the habit of meeting at the Café Guerbois, and at other places in Montmartre. They discussed life and art and all that related to it. Discovery was in the air. After their first exhibition they eagerly pursued the paths newly opened up, with all the enthusiasm of pioneers.

Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) had come from the Danish West Indies with the encouragement of Melbye, a travelling Danish artist. He surrendered at once to the influence of Corot and Courbet, who were the leading painters of the advanced school of the time. These influences are beautifully blended in the early work, "Printemps, Louveciennes" (No. 3,265), in which serenity and solidity and love of nature are happily combined. But it is pre-Impressionist and gives no hint of the depth and subtlety to which Pissarro attained later. Two other pictures in the collection express, very differently, the beauty of his mind and the delicacy of his perception. "Côte des Bœufs" (No. 4,197) was painted in 1887, in the early days of Impressionism. It is the sort of subject



LA PREMIÈRE SORTIE : Renoir.

which recurs often in Pissarro's work—houses seen through trees—one in which mystery is expressed by an infinitely subtle variety of colour values. The other picture is characteristic of his later work, although it is the only night picture he ever painted. It represents the Boulevard des Italiens at night (No. 4,119), and was painted in 1897, at a time when Pissarro had to paint a good deal from windows owing to some eye trouble which prevented him from painting much out of doors. Those street scenes of his later years, which are now so famous, have a rare beauty and truth. This particular picture is the most satisfactory painting of night—a subject which has baffled so many artists. And it is a purely Impressionist work. Its effects are obtained entirely by the juxtaposition of subtle tones of colour. The sky—dark, vast, and mysterious—receding into infinity, is a masterpiece of colour gradation. The figures, trees, wet streets, and lights are expressed with remarkable truth. Drawing, planes, atmosphere, light, and movement are all achieved simply by tones of colour. It touches the highest level of purely Impressionist art.

Camille Pissarro was the profoundest of the Impressionist painters, and for that and other reasons, the last to be fully appreciated. The quality of his mind was something more than that of an artist. He had a deep love—almost a worship—of nature in all its aspects. He was never content to practise a method for its own sake. It had value only as it helped him to express something of that insight and intense love of nature which animated his mind. In this respect he differed from, and was greater than, his friend, Claude Monet (1840–1926), who, delightful painter as he was, was too often content with the superficial appearance of things. Monet had the advantage of starting with a certain material security. That has some influence on a painter's spiritual development; he may not have to go so deeply or so desperately to the heart of things. Boudin had met him at Le Havre, and had instructed him in open-air painting when he was quite young. At the age of seventeen he was studying under Gleyre with Sisley and Renoir as his fellow-students. His earlier work was akin to the earlier Pissarro, and he, too, was influenced by Courbet, and, later, by Manet, though the latter was only eight years older than himself. His first paintings, which were usually on a large scale, were founded on a black and white basis; colour in them was not an essential means of expression—a curious fact, seeing that Monet was a superb colourist. Monet, in conjunction with others, helped to found the Impressionist School in 1874. His delightful little painting, "Plage de Trouville" (No. 3,951), which dates from 1870, shows the influence

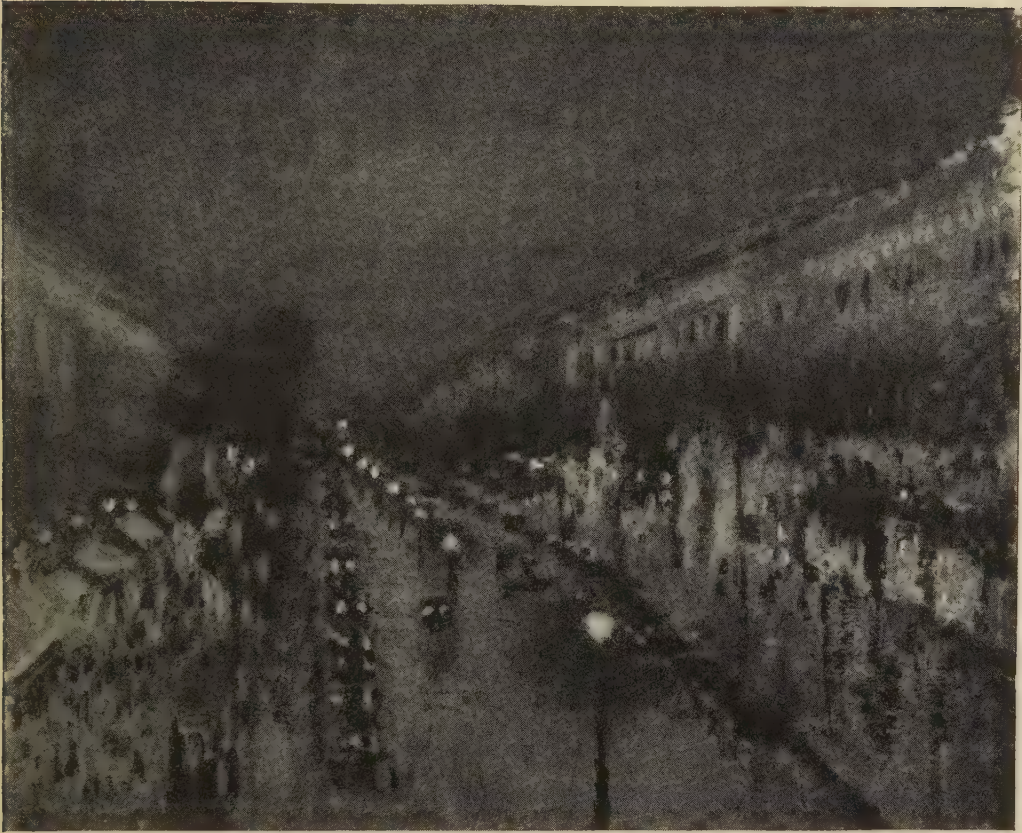


PLATE 28.—FEMME ASSISE : Degas.



COTE DES BŒUFS! C. Pissarro.

of Boudin's teaching, although it is so much broader in treatment and more painter-like than any of Boudin's work. But there was certainly nothing of the illustrator about Monet; he was purely an artist. If he had cared more for the thing he was painting he might have been greater, but he would have been less delightful and less easily appreciated. In 1870, at the time of the Franco-German War, he had visited England, where he saw and admired the work of Constable and Turner—the only two English artists who ever influenced French painters, if Bonington be excepted. The later work of Turner, which is instinctive Impressionism in the special sense of the word, may easily have influenced the Frenchman, who was then thirty years old, and ripened him for the Impressionistic development which was soon to come. So that, if Monet was not the actual inventor of the movement, he soon became its leader. It requires no great imagination to see in Monet's London pictures the influence of Turner. The main purpose of Impressionism—the exact truth of an effect of light, colour, and atmosphere at a given moment—was strongly pursued and highly developed by him; he became a rather narrow specialist, and in the later stages of his career he painted series of subjects, such as haystacks, cathedrals, water-lilies, which showed the same subjects under varying effects of light and atmosphere. These usually had a strange beauty, and conclusively proved the truth of the tenets on which the Impressionist School was founded. But in some instances—particularly when the subject was a cathedral—the quality and character of the subject was lost in the effect. The picture of "Vetheuil: Sunshine and Snow" (No. 3,263) is a fine example of his work about 1885. In it he is not conscious of his method, but uses it freely to express his immediate vision. There is no other purpose. It shows the adequacy of Impressionism as a means of portraying natural effect. It is extremely luminous, delightful in colour, and has that somewhat accidental air which is a charming trait in many Impressionist paintings. "Les Peupliers" (No. 4,183) is not nearly so satisfactory. It is a more or less discarded study for a more finished painting of the same subject. "Le Bassin aux Nymphéas" (No. 4,240) shows him in full maturity. It was painted in 1899, in the artist's garden at Giverny. It is very simple in subject, but is full of colour and light. It certainly proves that the greatest and most universal qualities of nature may be adequately manifested in the simplest scene; that it does not require the Alps to show the glory of sunshine or the magic of colour. There were moments when Monet was too easily satisfied—when he pursued the shadow and



BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS: C. Pissarro.

let slip the substance—but in his best work he was a poet of colour and light.

In this respect he was closely rivalled by his friend and colleague, Pierre Renoir (1841–1919), whose work has a wonderful iridescent quality of colouring.

Belonging to a poor family, he was employed at an early age as a painter on porcelain, and this had an influence on his early work, which is hard and brittle in quality. But his employment had also made him familiar with the use of bright, clean colour; it had become habitual, and, as an essential means of art expression, he carried pure colour farther than it has ever been carried before or since, so that some of his pictures, particularly in the late middle period, seem literally to glow with colour.

His last period was unfortunately spoilt by the paralysis which attacked

his right arm, so that he had to paint with a brush strapped to his wrist.

"La Première Sortie" (No. 3,859) is one of his most delightful paintings. It was painted about 1880, at the beginning of his best period. Like Pissarro's "Boulevard," it is an example of pure Impressionism.

A quite different figure was Édouard Manet (1832-83). He was a showy personality, and bulks largely in the history of French art of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Manet has frequently been called the founder of the Impressionist movement, a claim for which there is no evidence other than could be equally well used in favour of Monet or Pissarro. Strictly speaking, Manet was an Impressionist only at moments. He was always an Impressionist in the general sense—in the sense that Velazquez, Rembrandt, and Constable are Impressionists—but he was by no means consistent in the practice of the strict tenets of the French Impressionist School. The bulk of his work was not in accordance with Impressionism. The admirable "Concert aux Tuileries" (No. 3,260) is not; "Eva Gonzales" (No. 3,259), a *tour de force*, and "La Servante de Bocks" (No. 3,858) are only partly so; the clever sketch of a "Lady with a Cat" (No. 3,295) is much nearer.

Manet, we may believe, joined the group rather by way of contempt for the authorities and for "official" art than by way of preordination or conviction. He was a dandy and something of a *poseur*. He had a natural and very attractive sense of style, and took a special pleasure in the exercise of it. Of a somewhat aristocratic temper, he cared for the style of his paint in something of the same way that he cared for his personal presentation and demeanour in ordinary life. Both Manet and his art were debonair. He used paint very beautifully, and cultivated a gracious and suave style. The manner was as important to him as the matter. In this he differed from Pissarro, who in one sense cared little for the beauty or character of his technique so long as it was capable of expressing the depth and character of his vision of nature. That, for him, was its real and only use. Manet had the craftsman side of painting more strongly developed, and that influenced the character of his work. His rather early "Concert aux Tuileries" (No. 3,260), a very consistent and well-balanced picture, has passages of extremely beautiful painting which have not been excelled in modern art.

Manet travelled a good deal. He found the Spanish painters particularly sympathetic, and he came very much under the influence of Velazquez and Goya. The quality of elegance and reticence of Spanish painting



PLATE 29.—CÉZANNE CHAUVE : Cézanne.



MISS LOLA AT THE CIRQUE FERNANDO : Degas.

found a responsive note in his own disposition. The source of the "Concert" is obviously Spanish, although it is also so personal. It suggests the work of some modern Velazquez, with a greater breadth of handling and a freedom—a higher degree of abandon—than any found in the work of the great Spanish master. Its subtle modern quality—rather difficult to define—lies possibly in its more liberated Romanticism. It was painted before Impressionism, and certainly it does not belong to that school. It is entirely different in feeling and conception. Painted within a definite convention, it makes no surrender to nature. Black predominates in its limited and refined colour scheme, and that pigment was afterwards banished from the palettes of the Impressionists. It has been claimed that Manet inspired the movement, but there was nothing in his constellation, point of view, or earlier training that would make Impressionism the logical development of his work as there was in the case of Claude Monet, who was the Impressionist *par excellence*.

Even the effective "Servante de Bocks" (No. 3,858), which is dated 1877, is not inevitably Impressionistic. It has the pulse of life, and the compelling colour of nature has driven the sombre tones from his palette. But the division of tones in it is not very subtle, nor has that method played an essential part either in the conception or execution of the picture. It is something like the result of a graft of a Degas on to a Courbet. Its strength of design and insistence of drawing are unusual in an Impressionist painting.

It was his wonderful gift of drawing that kept Degas out of that school, much as he sympathized and exhibited with the members of it. His conception of nature is founded on a totally different basis. He felt things primarily through drawing and design and not through colour. Nor was colour analysis ever his object, as exact truth of effects of light and atmosphere at a given moment, which could be expressed in that way, was only a subsidiary motive, if it really moved his mind at all. Degas's natural gifts—and he had them in a high degree—were a power of draughtsmanship, peculiarly personal and sensitive, and a remarkable feeling for rhythmic design. Add to that a profound sympathy and a lively interest in the more characteristic aspects of life, and one gets the mental habit and the artistic equipment which produced the palpitating impressions of life, so profound and so perfectly expressed, which built up Degas's *œuvre* and produced his unique reputation.

In his paintings of the ballet he turned to a subject that was entirely



THE MANTELPIECE : Vuillard.

original, and one in which his special gifts of drawing and rhythm found unfettered expression. That vital side of his art is scarcely represented by "Danseuses" (No. 4,168), a somewhat late picture, but the originality of his mind could not be better expressed than by the daring and brilliant composition of "Miss Lola at the Cirque Fernando" (No. 4,131).

That is a superb example of pure painting, with its intense truth of values which gives it almost a passionate sense of reality. It is a permanent object-lesson, whose force neither time nor custom can impair, to the young painters of the present day who wish to fly before they can totter, and who excite so prematurely the compassion of the Contemporary Art Society. But it is the result of a superb perception, a profound sympathy, and a lifetime of hard work. If one did not know the extraordinary range and versatility of his mind, one might describe Degas as merely a great portrait painter, but he excelled in so many branches of art. His "Femme Assise" (No. 4,167) is a fine example of his portrait work. His treatment of portraits also had the quality of originality. He always painted his subjects in an intimate setting in the surroundings of their personal life, so the whole picture was imbued with the atmosphere

of the sitter, and the background played its part in the expression of personality.

Deriving from Degas are two delightful painters, Vuillard and Bonnard, both living artists. They unite his intimacy and his sense of pattern with a lyrical quality of colour. "The Mantelpiece" (No. 3,271) by Vuillard has a simplicity of handling and a truth of perception which may appeal to those least initiated in the mysteries of painting, while "La Table" (No. 4,134) by Bonnard is like a song—a lyrical expression of colour—in which the most ordinary objects of everyday life are transformed into poetic expression.

There are two other artists who ought to be mentioned—Alfred Sisley (1840–99) and Monticelli (1824–86). The former was closely related to Monet in his work. His colour was as fine and his judgment was as true, but he had a keener sense of the identity of his subject, although his work could never be described as literal. He was a realist, enjoying the beauty, feeling, and movement of life. He could not be content, as Monet was, to translate nature into colour and light with, sometimes, a loss of the sense of reality. This was probably due to the fact that he was partly English in origin. His work was varied, as may be seen in the two unusually fine examples in the National Collection: "L'Abreuvoir" (No. 4,138), an early work, and the sunny, breezy "Bridge at Sèvres" (No. 4,249), which both show a sensitive appreciation of natural effect and a delicate technique, very expressive of his moods.

Monticelli, a child of the South, who was born and died in Marseilles, was very different. He was descended from a Venetian family, and there was something of old Venice in his warm and passionate colour. His work shows some remote kinship with that of Watteau; but where Watteau, so to speak, used a rapier, Monticelli used a bludgeon. He perceived a scene as a whole, and not in parts; all details are lost and bathed in a flood of colour and light. Although everything was colour for him, form was not ignored, but expressed in a rather curious way, seldom, if ever, by line, but by applications of tones of colour. There is no difference in texture between the various objects in his pictures. To some extent the objects lose their identity—the quality of their substance. His work, with its rich pulsating generosity, is like a "beaker full of the warm South."

There remains a painter who, more than any other, has had a far-reaching influence on modern art—not only in Europe, but in America.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) was also a child of the South, having been



PLATE 30.—LA BAIGNADE : Seurat.

born at Aix in Provence. He was essentially a product of French Impressionism, although he had a richly romantic vein in his nature. When he first came to Paris he was greatly attracted to the pictures of Rubens, and all through his life at intervals he attempted compositions of nude figures which, different as they were from the stupendous work of Rubens, had their origin in that early admiration for the paintings of the great Flemish master. He learnt much from Camille Pissarro, with whom he used to go painting in the fields of Normandy. But he soon recognized what were the weaknesses of Impressionism, its lack of solidity, and its poverty of design. Cézanne wished to give to Impressionism something of the solid and enduring quality that he had found in the old masters. But he proceeded in an entirely new direction to achieve this end—through his extremely subtle sense of colour values, which had been trained and developed by his work with Pissarro.

So he retained the sense of truth to particular effects of light and atmosphere, which was the great contribution of the Impressionists to modern art, while adding the qualities of form, weight, and essential character of natural objects. He was difficult to satisfy, and in his earlier days frequently abandoned his unfinished paintings in the fields where he had been working.

In the later stages of his development he sometimes worked for years on a picture in order to attain exact truth. His work often has certain mannerisms which have been copied by his imitators, who have signally failed to understand the essence of his technique, which was based on the most refined colour analysis. He had a fine sense of rhythm, and frequently, especially in his compositions of nude figures, sacrificed drawing to the expression of it. Both his qualities, analysis and rhythm, are to be seen to advantage in his still-life paintings, of which there is, as yet, no example in the Gallery. But the subtlety of his colour perception is seen to perfection in the little portrait of himself called "Cézanne Chauve" (No. 4,135). It is a source of unfailing pleasure to trace the almost imperceptible gradations of colour in this painting.

There is no finer expression of truth to effect of light and atmosphere than the landscape "Aix: Paysage Rocheux" (No. 4,136), with its delicate realization of sun-suffused air. To many people the composition of this picture appears awkward, and even harsh; certainly it is unfamiliar and unacademic, but it has truth and character, which are possibly greater qualities than conventional balance.

The other Provençal landscape (lent by Miss Davies) is one of his

most interesting paintings; perhaps he might have carried it further—it is doubtful if he ever considered a picture finished, and some who sat to him for portraits suffered under his dissatisfaction—but it has glorious colour, and there is an inexhaustible mystery in its construction of that characteristic stretch of contorted country. It is built up with a certain rigidity and truth; and yet there is in it a strange elusiveness, so that one can return again and again to a contemplation of the picture with a sense of constant renewal.

One of the important factors in the development of modern art, here and abroad, has been Henri Matisse. He has had an influence possibly even more disastrous than that of Cézanne. Those students who have been entranced by his work have sought to imitate the end without regard for the beginning.

Matisse began as a more or less academic painter. His early work was carried as far as possible in the realistic manner. Gradually he developed a style which was, in effect, a sort of shorthand of expression. No one before him attained to such a crystalline quality of expression. His work was finally reduced to absolute essentials, and it is easy to understand that an imitation of such a result without the previous extensive knowledge and experience could result only in superficiality.

Too often the work of young painters which “enlightened” collectors patronize is but the imitated manner of some fully developed master. The attempt in art, as in life, to attain a result without paying the price is inevitable destruction.

XVIII

GAUGUIN AND VAN GOGH

THE movement known as French Impressionism was the most important and probably the only really new discovery in modern art. Its effects were far-reaching, immeasurable. The introduction into painting of real living colour and the serious study of effects of atmosphere and light on natural objects—not hitherto attempted—were of primary importance. If they provided a new means of expression, they also symbolized, as it were, the emancipation of the artist. The movement was in effect a Declaration of Independence—an assertion of the right of the artist to think for himself and to express his thoughts in his own way.

The corollary of this was the shifting of the point of view as regards the conception of art, and the idea that the object of art was the expression of the artist's personal impression was gradually admitted—tacitly at first, and then openly.

All this was not achieved without a bitter and devastating fight. Its triumph meant a staggering extension of the horizon—the opening up of unexplored fields. It led eventually to remarkably varied development and to some abuse. But at first the leaders and followers of the movement were fully occupied with the study of the newly revealed truths.

Seurat invented Neo-Impressionism—a strange confusion of means and end—which, though he flourished in it himself, proved to be an *impasse* incapable of further development. But Cézanne, leading Impressionism in another direction, attained a height from which, “with a wild surmise,” he looked down on a new continent which young, eager spirits have since been exploring. Many artistic sins have been committed in the name of Cézanne, but he was an original artist and a revealer.

Two other masters of the modern spirit, Gauguin and Van Gogh, though following divergent paths, were both products of Impressionism.

To it Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) owed the emancipation of his turbulent and exotic spirit.

He received the grounding of his art as companion and pupil of

Camille Pissarro. He could have had no sounder training nor one better suited for the foundation of his highly personal expression which developed later. There is no very close relationship between his later work, when he discovered his real personality, and the work of his earlier period, when he was studying and applying the methods of Pissarro.

But without that early and exhaustive study of nature and natural effect—of light, colour, and atmosphere—his later work would probably have been mannered and superficial. At first his work naturally resembled his master's, but it already showed signs of an original sense of design and an unusual and sometimes grotesque way of looking at things. His trained sensibility to colour expanded into fruition at Martinique, on his way to Tahiti, in that lovely landscape the "*Paysage Exotique*"—which used to belong to Mrs. Workman. In it colour—so beautiful that it seemed like an original revelation—was inseparably welded to rhythm and design.

Happily it was so in all his later work. He experienced pattern no less by colour than by line and mass. And that gives his work a rare distinction. There was something wild, primitive, savage in his constellation. The South Seas called him. In 1891 he went to Tahiti. And there his strange poetical dreams found the material through which they attained concrete expression. There he produced those fantastic pictures—fantastic but real—which are unique in the history of art. Seldom if ever before has poet or painter found such kinship, such profound sympathy, with a strange and primitive people.

It must be, too, a unique instance of the complete unity of the æsthetic with the mental or spiritual impulse. Gauguin's conception of colour and design was exotic; it was peculiarly fitted to express the mental atmosphere, the soul of the strange people among whom he settled, lived, and worked. It was a rare and happy union, and in Gauguin's case it is particularly useless to consider his work apart from its content. He lived in an enchanted land, and it is enchantment that he expresses with his incomparable gifts of colour and design.

There were occasional moments when his painting achieved little more than decorative designs, when his dreams were less potent, when the spirit, uncanny and foreboding, left him at peace, and then one may admire the beauty of his technique without experiencing that supernatural feeling which seems to haunt his best work and to give it that distinctive quality which makes it quite unique. The strange, savage spirit of the Tahitians seemed to be clearly revealed to him.



PLATE 31.—FLOWER PIECE : Gauguin.

His paintings certainly reveal the spirit, whatever it be, and that is a power always rare in art : " Ce qui," as he himself said, " n'est pas exprimé et qui, immatériel et supérieur, en constitue cependant l'essentiel."

Gauguin's work has an important bearing on the question of art and illustration.

In the hands of a lesser artist the subject-matter of his pictures would have resulted in the production of mere illustration—of records or description. But the remarkable spiritual union between the artist and the islanders brought his work immediately on to a much higher plane. He was indeed their own particular poet, and he sang of their daily lives and customs and religious practices—an inexhaustible mine of new material from which he drew the purest gold.

His technique was perfect for the expression of his intuition. The rich and rare colour delighted him ; the exotic flowers and vegetation stimulated his imagination, and the strange lithe bodies, their immobility and curious crouching poses, intensified his sense of rhythmic design.

It is often said that Gauguin invented new rhythms. That, I suppose, is nonsense. There is no new rhythm any more than there is new colour, but he discovered new uses of rhythmic expression, new harmonies, and new relations. But all for the purpose of revealing the visions which haunted his mind.

As he so well expressed it : " J'ai essayé dans un décor suggestif de traduire mon rêve sans aucun recours à des moyens littéraires, avec toute la simplicité possible de métier."

His work is not yet represented in the Gallery by any truly characteristic example. The canvas (No. 3,470) called " Faa Iheihe " is hardly a coherent design ; it is more like notes or memoranda of pictures which he contemplated painting. It shows the quality of the colour of his exotic harmonies, his decorative rhythm with something of the feeling of barbaric and heroic fatalism which haunts his pictures of the Tahiti period. The " Flower Piece " (No. 3,289) is a lovely thing, but it would give no hint of the peculiar quality of his more characteristic work to one who was unacquainted with his painting.

It is immensely superior to other flower paintings through the breadth of its handling, the rhythm of its design, and, above all, by the richness and balance of its colour. The black pot flanked and balanced on either side by the large blue leaves, the swing of the fringe of red flowers which break above and mingle with the greyish white petals and the yellow-gold background, all compose a sort of symphony of colour expressed with

perfect art, unconfused and unhurried by emotion, and yet conceived in the glow of experience, of suffering, of joy.

Very different, and yet fundamentally the same, was the art of Vincent Van Gogh (1853-90).

Vincent, as he signed his pictures, had a profound sympathy with all living things. His art was certainly born of suffering mitigated by joy of creation, which in his case was also a sort of pain. The power which gives such distinction to his work was his sympathy and the actual quality of vitality—almost of a super-vitality—which is instinct in all his pictures. He is a true child of Impressionism, expressing in his paintings his reaction to life, the intense feeling, the torturing emotion which nature in all its aspects aroused in him. His art, which so completely achieved his purpose, is in a way artless. He hardly allowed himself time to contrive, but painted in the passion of the moment, and he felt things with intolerable intensity. Those artistic qualities in his work, rhythm and design, vitality and colour, subtlety of atmosphere, are instinctive.

If technique be an integral part of intuition and inseparable from it, as Croce teaches us, then Van Gogh is the supreme instance of this truth. His impressions seem to be transferred red-hot to his canvas almost without mechanical intervention. Like the Impressionists, he found beauty everywhere and took the simplest things for his subjects—a yellow chair, a corner of a field without any sky in the picture. This very simplicity has been a stumbling-block to popular appreciation. For pictures have for so long been admired solely or mainly for their subjects that it seemed an outrage that a painter should come before the public with pictures in which there was nothing worthy to be called a subject. This Vincent was content with a common kitchen chair, and with it could produce an imperishable work of art.

He, too, is a proof of the truth of Carlyle's dictum that "the poet . . . can never have far to seek for a subject; the elements of his art are in him and around him on every hand; for him the ideal world is not remote from the actual, but under it and within it; nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there."

That same "Yellow Chair" (No. 3,862) has life and character of its own, if one has the mind to see it. It is a poem of colour; for colour is everywhere in life, not limited to sunsets. The colour in this picture is as pure and as glowing as any Turner. That scrap of nature, "Field at Arles" (No. 4,169), radiates with life, and is as vast in conception as any extensive and "important" landscape. It is not out of place hanging



THE YELLOW CHAIR : Van Gogh.

among acknowledged great works. Its rough, direct, personal, emphatic message, so full of agitation and nervousness, has a beauty of its own. It is like jewelled tapestry work.

The living flame-like vitality which is a quality of many of Van Gogh's later landscapes is seen to perfection in the "Landscape with Cypress Trees" (No. 3,861) with its miraculous field of corn which quivers in the breeze as one looks at it. This is a work of love, of love of nature, and a passionate understanding.

It requires no special knowledge to appreciate the beauty of "Sunflowers" (No. 3,863). That has an intrinsic beauty which arrests the beholder. The colour of it is very subtle, as any one who has tried to copy it must admit, and the remarkably varied texture of the paint and the use of that texture as a means of expression shows a highly responsive mind and keen co-ordination of hand and brain.

Van Gogh died at the early age of thirty-seven, consumed by the fires of his genius. His brief painting years were sadly interrupted by recurring spells of mental illness, many of which were spent in the asylum. His sensibilities were supernaturally intense; the mind could not bear it. He was late, too, in discovering that painting was his *métier*. Nearly thirty years of his tragically brief life were taken up in search for his proper vocation. He even tried the ministry, and preached to the miners of the Borinage in Belgium.

His work, so brilliantly varied, so unstinted in its vitality, was produced within some seven years of desperate energy. About eight hundred and thirty paintings and hundreds of drawings, water-colours, and lithographs meant an activity which has not often been paralleled in the history of art, and which recalls the feverish creation of Michelangelo himself.

Van Gogh's drawings, which have an unusual beauty and style, are unfortunately not yet represented in the Collection. They are intensely personal impressions, in a method unlike that of any other European artist, though sometimes recalling the work of certain Japanese masters. With a wonderfully sensitive hand he used his pen to invent a great variety of touches which expressed different kinds of growth of trees, flowers, grass, and other vegetation. This same power one finds again in the painting of the sunflowers. He had indeed an infinite variety, which is a constant source of delight and amazement.

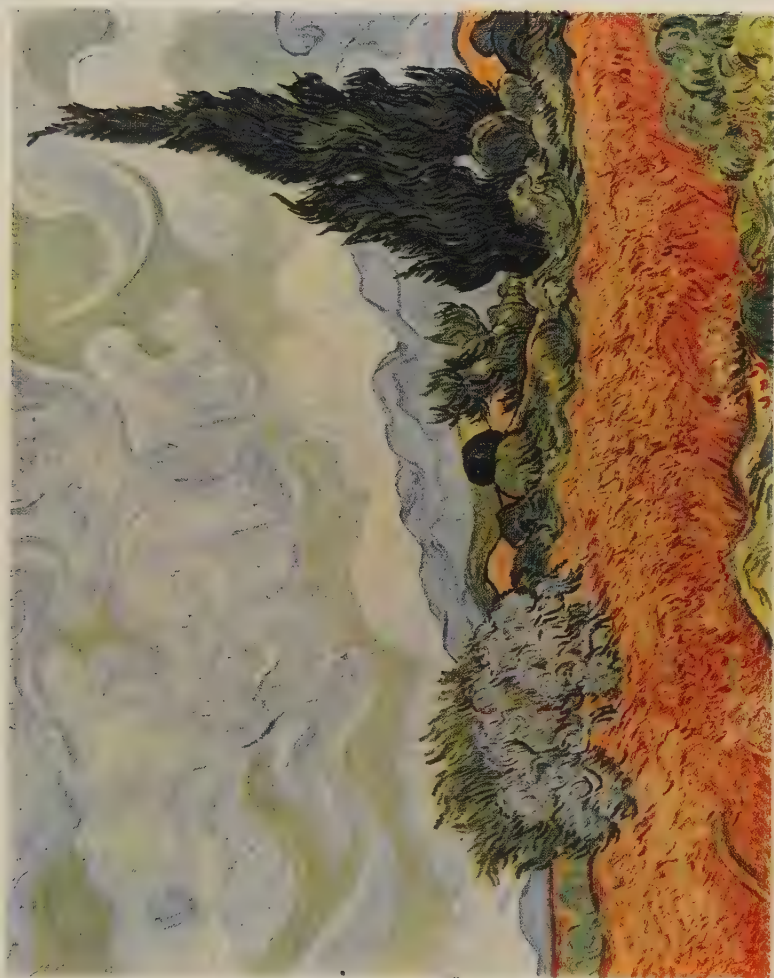


PLATE 32.—LANDSCAPE WITH CYPRESS TREES: Van Gogh.

INDEX

ALBERTOLLI, 94.
 Allan, William, 169.
 Alma-Tadema, 13, 14, 119, 120, 124.
 Angerstein, 17.
 Archer, James, 90.
 Armstead, 158, 159.
 Aumonier, J., 121, 135.

 BANKS, Thomas, 158.
 Barker, Thomas, of Bath, 57, 59.
 Barnard, George, 161.
 Basire, James, 34.
 Bastien-Lepage, 116, 123, 124.
 Bates, Henry, 159, 160, 161.
 Baudelaire, 175.
 Bayes, Walter, 143, 144.
 Baynes, Keith, 149.
 Beaumont, Sir George, 45.
 Beckford, William, 59.
 Beechey, Sir William, 31.
 Behnes, William, 109, 110.
 Bell, Clive, 148.
 Bell, Vanessa, 149, 155.
 Bevan, R. P., 149.
 Bird, Edward, 169.
 Birket Foster, 59.
 Bishop, Henry, 99, 146.
 Blake, Robert, 34, 36.
 Blake, William, 2, 32-40.
 Blanche, Jacques, 135.
 Bloomsbury Group, The, 148.
 Bone, Muirhead, 147.
 Bonington, R. P., 51, 54, 55, 60, 169, 182.
 Bonnard, P., 125, 136, 187.
 Boucher, Catherine, 34.
 Boudin, Eugène Louis, 174, 180, 182.
 Bracquemond, 101.
 Bramley, F., 124, 135.
 Brett, John, 119.
 Briggs, H. P., 169.
 Brock, Sir Thomas, 159.
 Brockedon, William, 44.
 Brough, Robert, 106, 127, 128.
 Brown, Arnesby, 123.

Brown, Ford Madox, 6, 81, 85, 86.
 Bundy, Edgar, 120, 124.
 Burne-Jones, Sir Edward, 109, 112, 113, 114, 115.
 Burrell, Sir William, 104.
 Butts, Thomas, 36, 37.

 CALCOTT, Sir W. A., 57, 59, 169.
 Calvert, Edward, 39, 40.
 Cameron, Sir D. Y., 143, 144.
 Canaletto, 55.
 Carolus-Duran, 126.
 Cézanne, Paul, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 125, 127, 141, 143, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 171, 188, 189, 191.
 Chantrey, 44, 169.
 Chantrey Bequest, 158, 165-169.
 Charles, James, 135.
 Chevreuil, 178.
 Chintreuil, Antoine, 174.
 Clark, Joseph, 166.
 Claude, 41, 45, 64, 66, 67, 68.
 Clausen, Sir George, 116, 124, 135.
 Collier, Hon. John, 128.
 Collins, William, 59, 117.
 Collinson, James, 80, 90.
 Colton, W. R., 159.
 Conder, Charles, 10, 99, 102, 103.
 Connard, Philip, 168.
 Constable, John, 2, 6, 7, 8, 43, 44, 45, 47-50, 54, 57, 59, 60, 72, 75, 81, 135, 136, 168, 182, 183.
 Copley, J. S., 30.
 Cornelius, 81.
 Corot, 44, 69, 80, 121, 170-174, 177, 178.
 Correggio, 34, 65.
 Cotman, J. S., 50, 51, 52, 54, 57.
 Courbet, Gustave, 80, 100, 170, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 180, 186.
 Courtauld, Samuel, 170.
 Cox, David, 59.
 Cozens, Alexander, 59.
 Cozens, J. R., 55, 57, 59, 63.
 Craig, F., 124.

- Crawhall, Joseph, 103, 104.
 Creswick, 169.
 Croce, B., 194.
 Crome, John Bernay, 50.
 Crome, Old, 2, 6, 43, 44, 49, 51, 52, 54.
 Cromek, 38.
 Cubism, 6, 141, 149, 152.

 DALOU, 160, 161.
 Danby, 169.
 Daubigny, 44, 174, 177.
 Daumier, Honoré, 80, 120, 174, 175, 177.
 David, 173.
 Dayes, Edward, 55, 57.
 Degas, Edgar, 7, 9, 81, 86, 97, 98, 101, 104, 125, 127, 136, 163, 174, 186, 187.
 Delacroix, 54, 55, 80, 82, 84, 86, 172, 173, 174, 177.
 De Louthembourg, 169.
 Deverell, 90.
 De Wint, Peter, 59.
 Diaz, 174, 177.
 Dickens, Charles, 84.
 Dicksee, Sir Frank, 83, 120.
 Dixon, R. W., 113.
 Dobson, Frank, 157, 162.
 Dodd, Francis, 143.
 Domenichino, 65.
 Douglas, W. Fettes, 90.
 Du Maurier, 101.
 Durand-Ruel, 178.
 Duranty, 178.
 Dürer, 34.
 Duret, Théodore, 178.
 Duveen, Sir Joseph, 170.

 EARLOM, 68.
 Eastlake, 169.
 Egg, A. L., 169.
 Elgin Marbles, 109, 110, 118.
 El Greco, 119, 149.
 Epstein, Jacob, 157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 168.
 Eragny Press, 139.
 Essex, Earl of, 57.
 Etty, W., 169.

 FANTIN-LATOURE, 101, 168.
 Fielding, Copley, 54, 60.
 Fildes, Sir Luke, 120, 124.
 Finch, Oliver, 38.
 Fisher, Mark, 55, 135.
 Flaxman, John, 34, 38, 39, 157, 158.
 Foley, J. H., 158.

 Forbes, Stanhope, 124.
 Ford, Onslow, 159.
 Foundling Hospital, 41.
 Francia, L., 54, 57.
 Fraser, A., 169.
 French Impressionists, 2, 5, 7, 8, 30, 75, 81, 100, 135, 137, 138, 141, 148, 171, 178, 182, 183.
 Frith, W. P., 19, 77, 78.
 Fry, Roger, 148.
 Furse, C. W., 127, 128.
 Fuseli, H., 37, 39, 40.

 GAINSBOROUGH, Thomas, 1, 2, 6, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 28, 41, 43, 44, 45, 50, 73, 168, 169.
 Gamble, 16.
 Garbe, Richard, 163.
 Gardner, David, 45.
 Gauguin, Paul, 149, 191-193.
 Gautier, T., 175.
 Geddes, A., 169.
 George Rae Collection, 82.
 Gertler, Mark, 154.
 Gibson, John, 157, 158, 159.
 Gilbert, Alfred, 172.
 Gill, Eric, 162.
 Gilman, Harold, 5, 138, 140, 141.
 Ginner, Charles, 141, 154.
 Giorgione, 65.
 Girtin, T., 45, 51, 55, 57, 59, 63.
 Glasgow School, 116, 123.
 Gleyre, 180.
 Goethe, 71.
 Good, T. S., 169.
 Goodall, F., 124, 169.
 Gordine, Dora, 163.
 Gore, Spencer, 5, 138, 140, 141, 149.
 Goya, 23, 174, 184.
 Grant, Duncan, 149, 151.
 Gravelot, Hubert, 22.
 Greaves, Walter, 107, 168.
 Gros, Baron, 54.
 Guerin, 173.

 HACKER, Arthur, 135.
 Haghe, L., 169.
 Hamilton, Lady, 24.
 Hardwick, Thomas, 62, 63.
 Hardwicke, Lord, 57.
 Hart, S., 169.
 Hartwell, C. L., 159.
 Hayden, F. Seymour, 101.
 Haydon, B., 74, 76.

- Hayley, 38.
 Hayman, Francis, 22.
 Herbert, 169.
 Herkomer, Sir H., 128.
 Herring, J. F., 169.
 Highmore, Joseph, 15.
 Hilton, William, 166, 169.
 Hobbema, 6, 49, 50.
 Hogarth, William, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 170.
 Holl, Frank, 119.
 Holland, James, 60.
 Holman-Hunt, William, 3, 10, 80, 86, 88, 90, 168.
 Holmes, Sir C. J., 143, 144, 146.
 Hook, J. C., 123.
 Hoppner, John, 31.
 Horsley, J. C., 30, 169.
 Houghton, A. Boyd, 6, 90.
 Howard, 169.
 Hudson, Thomas, 19, 20.
 Hughes, Arthur, 10, 86, 88.
 Hurlstone, 74, 75.
 Huyssing, Hans, 28.

 IMPERIALE, 28.
 Impressionism, 6.
 Ingres, 171.
 Innes, J. D., 168.
 Italian Futurism, 150.

 JACK, Richard, 127.
 Jacque, C., 177.
 James, Henry, 133, 155.
 John, Augustus, 4, 110, 128, 130.
 Johnson, Bookseller, 37.
 Johnson, Dr., 20.
 Johnston, 169.
 Jones, George, R.A., 169.

 KEENE, CHARLES, 6, 119, 168.
 Kelmscott Press, 113.
 Kneller, Sir Godfrey, 1, 15.

 LADBROOKE, Robert, 49.
 Lance, G., 169.
 Landseer, Sir Edwin, 3, 30, 78, 79, 93, 117, 169.
 Lane, 169.
 Lane, Sir Hugh, 170.
 Lantéri, Edward, 159.
 La Thangue, 116, 124.
 Lavater, 18.
 Lavery, Sir John, 106, 131, 132, 135.

 Lawrence, Sir Thomas, 3, 28, 29, 45, 47, 54, 60, 73.
 Lee, 169.
 Legros, Alphonse, 101, 117, 163.
 Leighton, Lord, 104, 120, 124, 158.
 Lely, Sir Peter, 1, 15, 109.
 Leslie, C. R., 77, 78, 169.
 Leslie, G. D., 78.
 Lewis, G. R., 59.
 Lewis, J. F., 90.
 Linnell, John, 36, 38, 169.
 London Group, 148.

 McEvoy, Ambrose, 4, 102, 131, 132.
 Mackennal, B., 159.
 Maclise, D., 169.
 Malton, Thomas, 62.
 Manet, Edouard, 7, 127, 148, 177, 180, 183, 184.
 Manson, J. B., 140.
 Marshall, Benjamin, 2.
 Marshall, W. Calder, 159.
 Martin, John, 61.
 Martineau, R. B., 6, 90.
 Matisse, Henri, 152, 189.
 Meninsky, Bernard, 151.
 Michelangelo, 33, 94, 97, 161.
 Millais, 29, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 168.
 Milles, Carl, 163.
 Millet, J. F., 174, 177.
 Monet, C., 125, 135, 169, 171, 174, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 184, 187.
 Monro, Dr. Thomas, 55, 59, 63.
 Monticelli, 187, 188.
 Moore, Albert, 104, 112.
 Moore, Henry, 123.
 Morland, George, 6, 28, 50, 63.
 Morland, Henry Robert, 28.
 Morris, William, 113.
 Muirhead, David, 147.
 Mulgrave, Lord, 57.
 Müller, W. J., 41, 59, 169.
 Munnings, Alfred, 147.
 Murray, Sir D., 123.

 NASH, Paul, 152.
 Nasmyth, P., 169.
 "Neo-Realism," 141.
 Nevinson, C. R. W., 150.
 New English Art Club, 4, 134, 138.
 Newlyn School, 116, 123, 124.
 Newton, G. S., 77, 169.
 Nicholson, William, 99, 106, 131, 132.
 Northcote, James, R.A., 20.

- Norwich School, 2, 49, 54.
 Norwich Society, 49.
 Nurse Cavell, 162.
- ORCHARDSON, SIR W. Q., 116, 121, 168.
 Orpen, Sir William, 4, 131.
 Overbeck, 81.
- PALLICE, 62.
 Palmer, Samuel, 38, 39, 40.
 Pegram, Henry, 159.
 Peppercorn, 135.
 Pettie, J., 76, 116, 121.
 Philipon, 175.
 Philips, T., 169.
 Philpot, Glyn, 131, 132.
 Picasso, 149, 152.
 Pickersgill, H. W., 30, 169.
 Piero della Francesca, 4.
 Piranesi, 55.
 Pissarro, Camille, 12, 127, 169, 171, 177,
 178, 180, 184, 188, 192.
 Pissarro, Lucien, 5, 138.
 Platio da Constanza, 43.
 Porden, William, 62.
 Post-Impressionism, 5, 143, 148, 149.
 Potter, Frank Huddleston, 99, 104.
 Poussin, 41, 65, 66.
 Poynter, Sir E. J., 120, 124.
 Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 3, 10, 26, 39,
 74, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88, 90, 92, 112, 113,
 115, 116.
- RAEBURN, Sir Henry, 2, 26.
 Ramsay, Allan, 28.
 Raphael, 33, 65.
 Redgrave, 169.
 Reid, J. R., 121, 124.
 Rembrandt, 4, 15, 20, 34, 65, 98, 101, 118,
 119, 126, 183.
 Renoir, 158, 163, 177, 180.
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 1, 2, 7, 18, 19, 20,
 23, 24, 26, 28, 63, 72, 73, 112, 158,
 168.
 Richardson, 19.
 Richmond, George, 37, 38, 39, 40.
 Rippingille, 169.
 Roberts, William, 152, 169.
 Rodin, 160, 161, 163.
 Romano, Giulio, 34.
 Rombaux, 164.
 Romney, George, 1, 24, 26, 28, 39, 169.
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 3, 81, 82, 83, 85,
 86, 113.
- Rossetti, W. M., 80.
 Rothenstein, Professor W., 4, 128, 129,
 132, 141.
 Rousseau, 177.
 Rousseau, *douanier*, 5, 150.
 Roussel, Théodore, 107, 135.
 Royal Academy, 8, 11, 24.
 Rubens, 23, 24, 34, 65, 188.
 Ruskin, John, 7, 83, 104.
 Russell, W. W., 128.
 Ruysdael, 45, 50, 65.
- SADLER, W. D., 124.
 St. George's Hospital, 41.
 Sandby, Paul, 59, 62.
 Sandby, Thomas, 59.
 Sargent, John Singer, 4, 106, 125-128, 130,
 135.
 Scott, Samuel, 169.
 Shannon, J. J., 128, 135.
 Shee, 169.
 Sickert, Richard Walter, 4, 86, 99, 103,
 107, 125, 127, 136.
 Simpson, 169.
 Sims, Charles, 33, 146, 147.
 Sisley, A., 177, 180, 187.
 Slade School, 148.
 Smith, J. R., 55, 62.
 Spencer, Stanley, 152, 154.
 Stanfield, 71, 169.
 Stanhope, Spencer, 90.
 Stark, James, 49.
 Steele, Christopher, 26.
 Steer, P. Wilson, 4, 6, 125, 127, 133, 135,
 136, 138, 168.
 Stephens, F. G., 80.
 Stevens, Alfred, 54, 93-98, 168.
 Stokes, A., 123.
 Stone, Marcus, 124.
 Stothard, 34, 39.
 Stott, Edward, 116, 135.
 Strang, W., 128, 129.
 Stuart, Gilbert, 30, 77.
 Stubbs, George, 2, 6, 28, 121.
 Studd, A. H., 107.
- TENIERS, 75.
 Theory of Colour, The, by Goethe, 71.
 Thomas, J. Havard, 159, 160.
 Thomson, H., 169.
 Thornhill, Sir James, 16.
 Thornton, 38.
 Thorwaldsen, 94.
 Tintoretto, 94.

- Titian, 34, 65, 94, 110.
 Toms, Mr., 20.
 Tonks, Professor, 4, 133, 138.
 Troyon, 174.
 Tuke, H. S., 124, 135.
 Turner, Dawson, 52.
 Turner, J. M. W., 2, 6, 7, 12, 32, 33, 43, 51,
 55, 57, 59, 61-73, 75, 135, 136, 158,
 182, 194.
 *Turner, Percy M., 52.

 UWINS, 169.

 VAN DER NEER, 50.
 Van Dyck, 1, 6, 15, 23.
 Van Gogh, 11, 12, 61, 107, 108, 149, 158,
 191, 194-196.
 Vanhaaken, 20.
 Varley, John, 38, 63.
 Velazquez, 75, 98, 118, 126, 127, 183, 184.
 Vernet, C. J., 41.
 Vernon, Robert, 48, 169.
 Vincent, George, 49.
 Vuillard, 136, 187.

 WALKER, Ethel, 141.
 Walker, Frederick, 118.
 Wallis, Henry, 90.
 Ward, E. M., 74, 76, 169.

 Ward, James, 169.
 Waterhouse, J. W., 124.
 Watteau, 136, 188.
 Watts, G. F., 33, 55, 75, 109-112, 168.
 Webster, 169.
 Weekes, Henry, 157.
 West, Sir Benjamin, 29, 117.
 Whistler, Francis, 49.
 Whistler, J. A. Mc., 4, 19, 99-108, 116,
 119, 131, 136, 137, 146.
 Whitley, William T., 22.
 Wilkie, Sir David, 3, 9, 67, 75, 76.
 Williams, Penry, 169.
 Wilson, Richard, 1, 2, 6, 19, 22, 41, 44,
 45, 50, 52, 64, 168.
 Windus, W. L., 88.
 Witherington, 169.
 Wood, F. Derwent, 159.
 Woolner, 80.
 Wootton, 2.
 Wyatt, 169.
 Wyllie, 135.
 Wynants, 22.

 YEAMES, 168.

 ZOFFANY, Johann, 1, 2, 3, 31, 137.
 Zola, 178.
 Zuccarelli, 41.

